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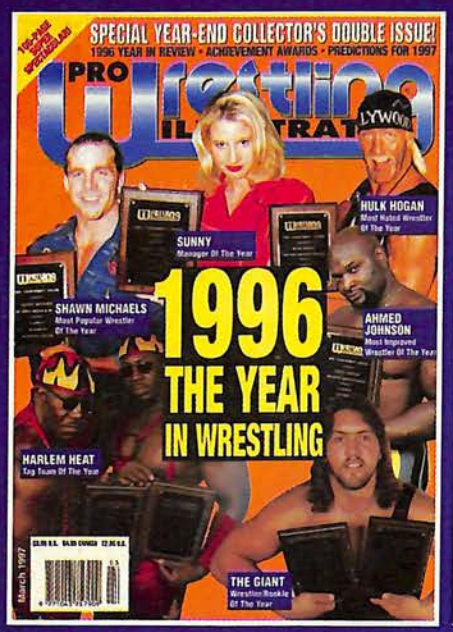
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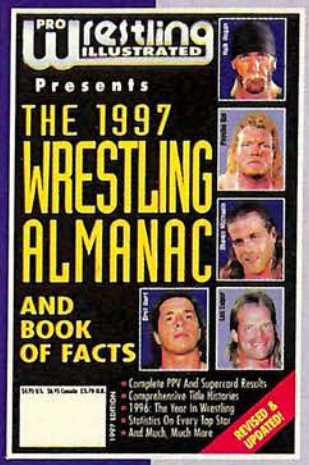
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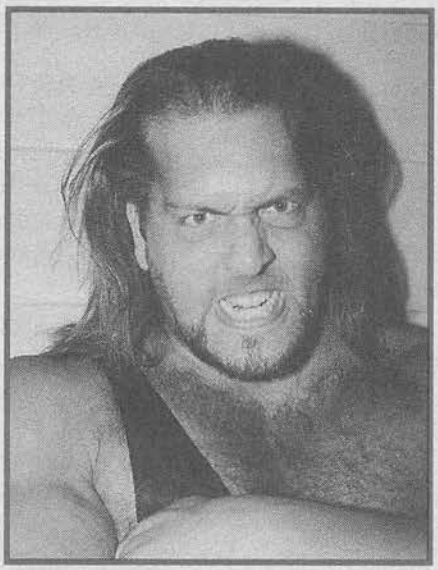
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Welcome To

INSIDE WRESTLING PRESENTS:

WRESTLING YEARBOOK!

HERE WE GO again. This time last year, we were telling you about this unusual new idea we had for a magazine: Not only would we give you 32 gorgeous, full-page, full-color pinups and insightful scouting reports on 29 of the top wrestlers/tag teams in the world, but we'd also try something new: We'd present full-page caricatures of the stars next to their scouting reports.

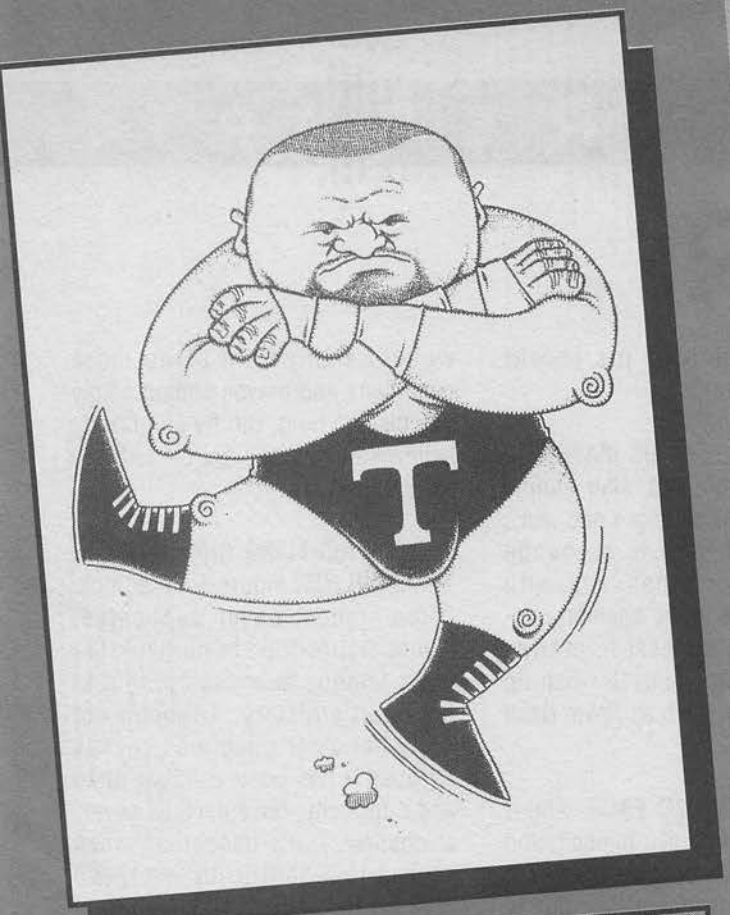
That's where Jason Conlan, our Australia-based cartoonist, came in. We just gave him the names and he went to work. We thought he did a brilliant job last year, and so did you. We got thousands of letters about last year's issue—most of them very positive—so this year, we decided to stick with what worked so very well.

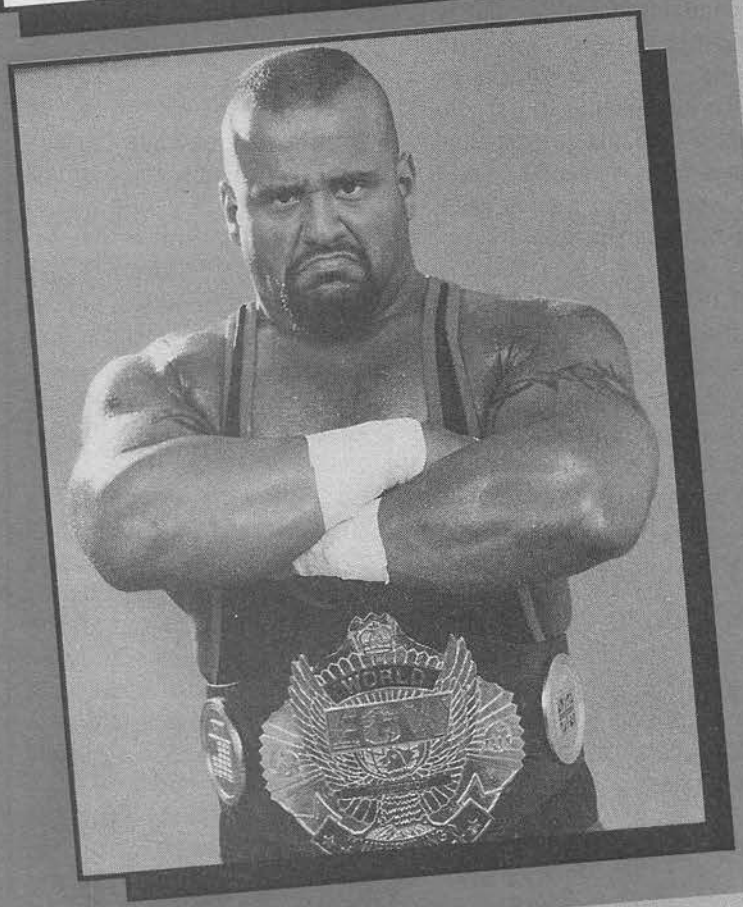
So it's time for 32 more fantastic full-color pinups, 29 more scouting reports, and 29 more outrageous caricatures. We repeated some of the same names from last year, but Jason made sure to make all appropriate changes in his drawings and we, of course, updated the scouting reports.

We certainly enjoyed Jason's efforts again this year, and we hope you do, too. Incidentally, you can check out his work every month in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* (he signs his cartoons "Mister J").

If you have any comments on this year's edition of WRESTLING YEARBOOK (especially your thoughts on those crazy Conlan caricatures), we'd be very interested to hear from you. Write to us at: WRESTLING YEARBOOK, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

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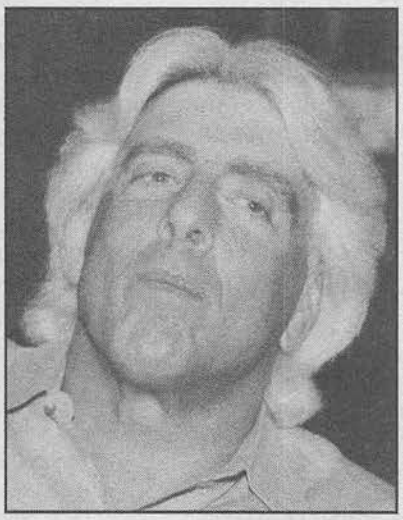
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SCOUTING REPORT:

RIC FLAIR



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 17-15-1; tag teams: 7-4-1

CAREER OVERVIEW: Simply one of the greatest ever. A 13-time world heavyweight champion who's still going relatively strong after coming back from a career-threatening shoulder injury. As influential as he's ever been as the leader of The Four Horsemen and one of the few men in the world who can pack an arena with his mere presence. The only downside: He has a surprisingly mediocre pay-per-view record.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Age and injuries have taken their toll on the "Nature Boy," who once was the toughest man to beat in matches lasting more than 30 minutes. Has gone the distance against some of the best wrestlers in the world, including Rick Steamboat and Terry Funk. Remains solid in long matches, but is now at his best in the 15-to-20-minute range, rather than the 30-to-50-minute range, and has restricted much of his recent action to tag teams.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first five minutes. Flair simply doesn't have the strength and lacks the physical health to exchange punches and clotheslines with power wrestlers in the opening minutes. Never at his best in brawls, Flair has to watch himself when up against big men such as Kevin Nash and Scott Hall.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Smart scientific wrestlers like himself who won't punish him physically and will test his mental strength. Flair is enjoying his current feud with Roddy Piper because Piper is so much like him. Wants to get into mind battles. Wants to exchange mat moves. Likes it when he doesn't have to worry about getting overpowered by his opponent.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Big men with some skill such as Nash. A big man who won't quit, like Hulk Hogan. Hogan temporarily put Flair in retirement in 1994. Nash is smart enough to avoid Flair's tricks and won't go for the classic Slick Ric move: playing possum.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Forearms to the shoulder; all power directed at the shoulder. Backbreakers and Boston crabs. Flair's upper body has taken a beating over the years.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: It's kind of late to teach him new tricks, but Flair would benefit from using more piledrivers and maybe adding a new submission hold. But he stubbornly believes he can still get by with the same repertoire.

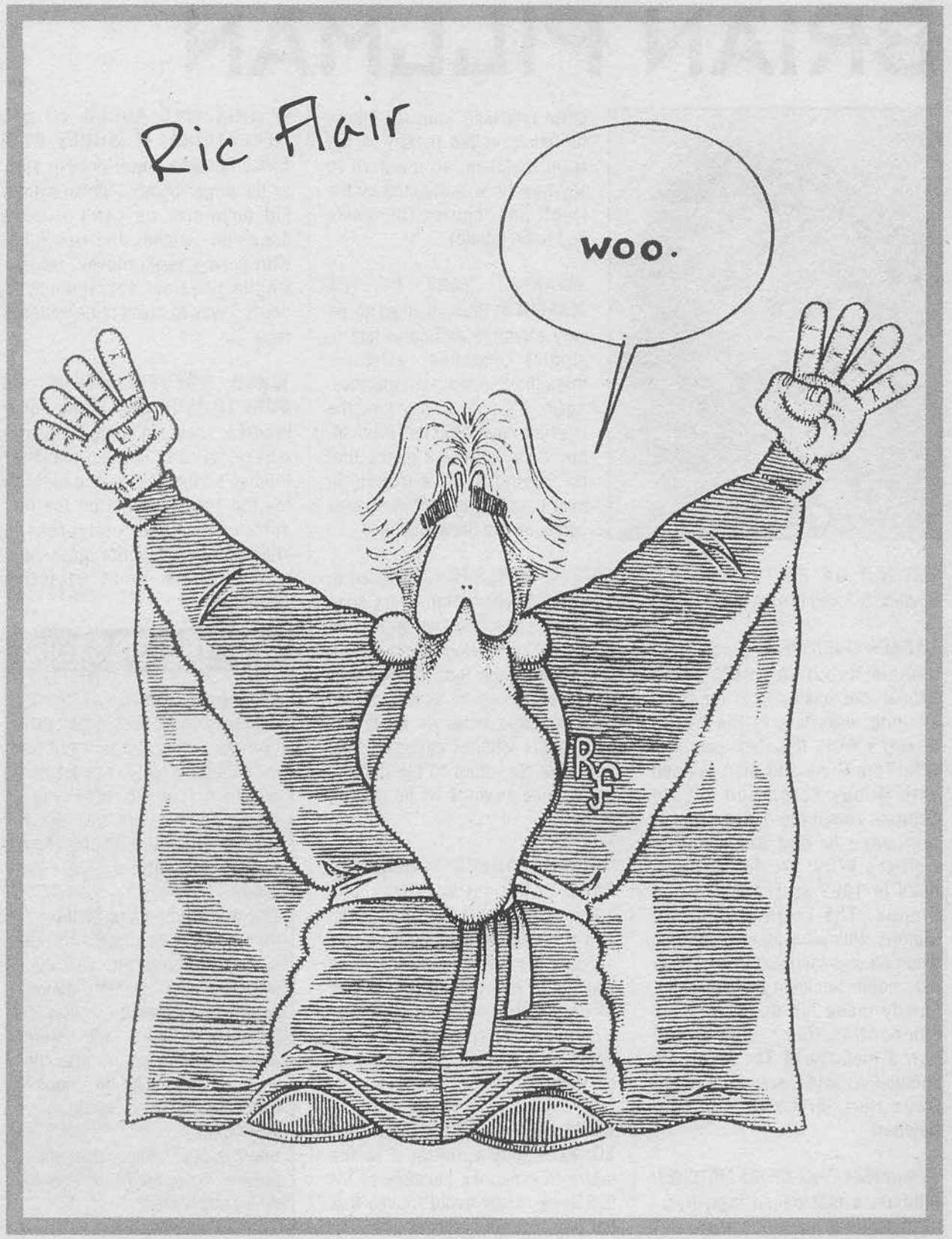
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Figure-four leglock. Often copied, never duplicated. Flair's figure-four is perhaps the most famous submission hold in the sport's history. Although not as lethal as it once was (partly because it has been used so often and opponents have devised several counters), it's dangerous when applied to a sufficiently weakened opponent.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "Flair is probably the greatest wrestler in the history of wrestling. It's hard to say anything bad about him because even though he has slipped a few notches, he's still better than 90 percent of all other wrestlers. So I won't criticize him. He has earned the right to retire whenever he wishes."

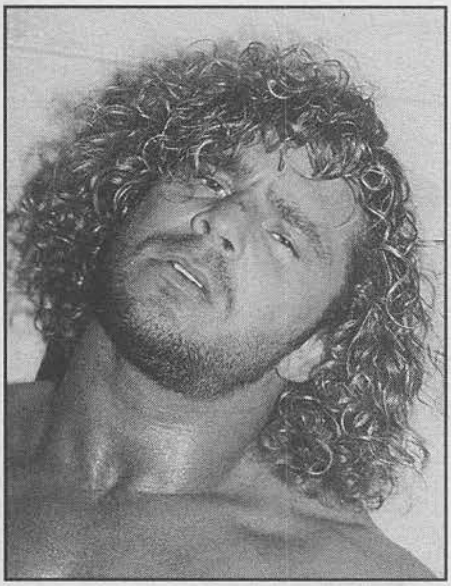
J.J. Dillon, chairman of the WCW Executive Committee: "I managed Ric for several years and was always impressed by his determination and strong work ethic. Truly one of the all-time greats. Now I have the opportunity to watch him from another angle and it is equally enjoyable."

NWO member Kevin Nash: "No disrespect intended, of course, but it's time for guys like Flair to step aside."


Ric Flair
WOO.
RF

SCOUTING REPORT:

BRIAN PILLMAN



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 5-2; tag teams: 5-5-1

CAREER OVERVIEW: Since making his debut in 1986, Brian Pillman has been one of the most exciting wrestlers in the world. Won the WCW U.S. tag team title with Tom Zenk and also teamed with Bobby Eaton and 2 Cold Scorpio. Found the right combination when he and Steve Austin won the WCW World tag team belts in 1993 as The Hollywood Blonds. The reign lasted five months. Pillman was on the move when he was involved in a serious automobile accident in April 1996. Finally made his debut in WWF competition this spring and is now a member of The New Hart Foundation with Davey Boy Smith, Owen Hart, Bret Hart, and Jim Neidhart.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Pillman, a fast-paced high-flyer, used to be a marathon man. But since returning from the injury, he has wrestled mostly in tag team matches, so it's hard to say how he was affected by the layoff and injuries (his ankle had to be rebuilt).

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Pillman used to be very effective early and late in singles matches, effective throughout in tag team matches. Again, it's hard to say how the injuries have affected Pillman, but we'll venture a guess that he's going to have trouble in long matches, especially against someone like Steve Austin.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Used to love facing fellow high-flyers such as Jushin Liger, from whom he won the WCW light heavyweight title. It was a challenge that Pillman was almost always up to, as he matched men like Liger move for move and brought the action to daring heights. But since his return to the ring, he hasn't done as much as he used to in the air.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Solid mat wrestlers who might go after his repaired ankle. The problem is that Pillman has become a maniac in recent years and might make the fatal mistake of going head-to-head with mat wrestlers and risking injury. He does not back off. That could be his downfall.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Extremely vulnerable to the figure-four leglock because of his bad ankle. Must avoid moves that put pressure on his legs.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A power finisher such as the power bomb. Pillman's not a kid anymore; he can't wrestle marathon matches and risk injury with daring aerial moves. He is a fragile physical specimen who needs a way to finish more matches early.

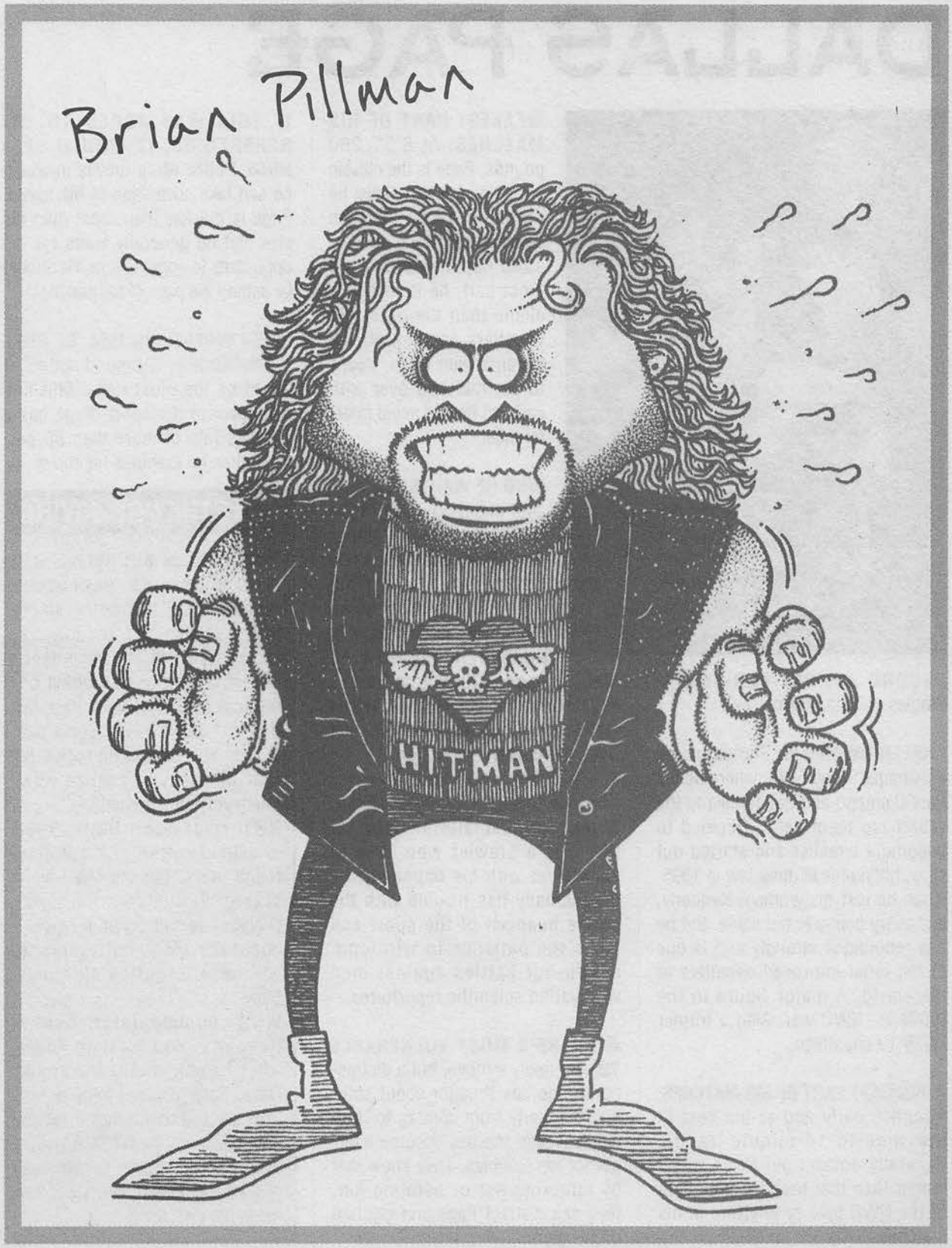
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Flying bodypresses. They can come from anywhere at any time, whether Pillman's standing on the mat, on the top rope, or even on the ring apron. The flying bodypress is still one of his favorite moves and probably his most effective weapon.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Bret Hart: "The way I see it, Pillman's come back better than ever. He's smart to go about his comeback slowly, but I think within a few months, we're going to see the old Brian Pillman. He's one of the most exciting wrestlers I've ever seen."

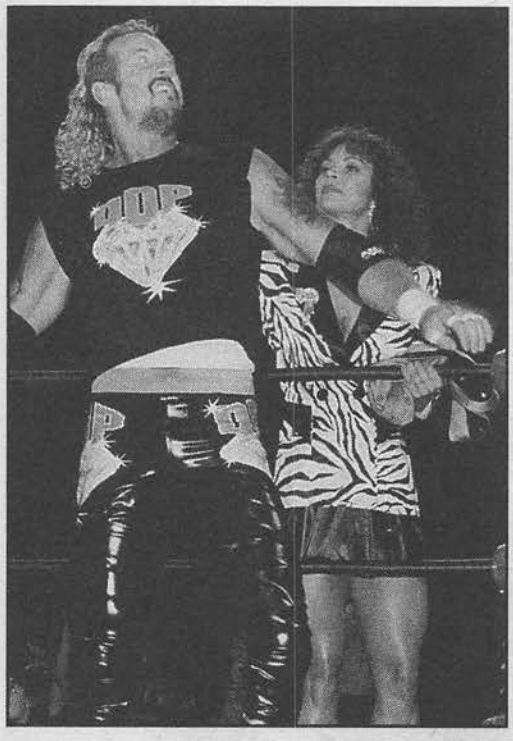
Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "I think Pillman has lost a marble or two. It's amazing. The man slammed a vehicle into a stationary block of cement and lived to tell about it. By the way, beating Jesse James in singles matches, which is something he's done a lot of recently, is nothing to crow about."

Steve Austin: "Pillman has some proving to do, but he ain't gonna do it against me."


Brian Pillman
HITMAN

SCOUTING REPORT:

DALLAS PAGE



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 5-7; tag teams: 1-2

CAREER OVERVIEW: Started out as a manager in the AWA, where he led Paul Diamond and Pat Tanaka to the World tag team belts. Decided to become a wrestler and started out slow, hitting his all-time low in 1995, when he lost his woman, Kimberly, and every penny to his name. But he has rebounded strongly and is one of the most improved wrestlers in the world. A major figure in the WCW vs. NWO war. Also a former WCW TV champion.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Attentive early and at his best in the nine-to-14-minute range. Generally doesn't get to go much longer than that because members of the NWO love to interfere in his matches.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: At 6'5", 260 pounds, Page is the classic big man with mat skills; he doesn't like long matches unless he is facing similar-sized opponents. For the most part, he is in better shape than the other big wrestlers and can go the distance with them. Needs to get matches over with early so he can avoid interference.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Just about anybody in the NWO. He fears no one in that group and gets a real adrenaline rush from wrestling his most hated rivals. Has fared very well against Randy "Macho Man" Savage, with whom he has had his most vicious feud. Mat skills match up well against those of most NWO members.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Scientific specialists. Page, at heart, is a brawler who likes to slug it out with his opponent. He occasionally has trouble with the subtle nuances of the sport and lacks the patience to win long, drawn-out battles against men with varied scientific repertoires.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Not really a move, but a distraction. Page has thought about stopping Kimberly from coming to ringside because she has become a target for his enemies. They know that by attacking her or berating her, they can distract Page and get him off his game.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: More moves in which he can take advantage of his speed. Page is quicker than most men his size, yet he generally waits for his opponents to come to him. He should be setting the pace of his matches.

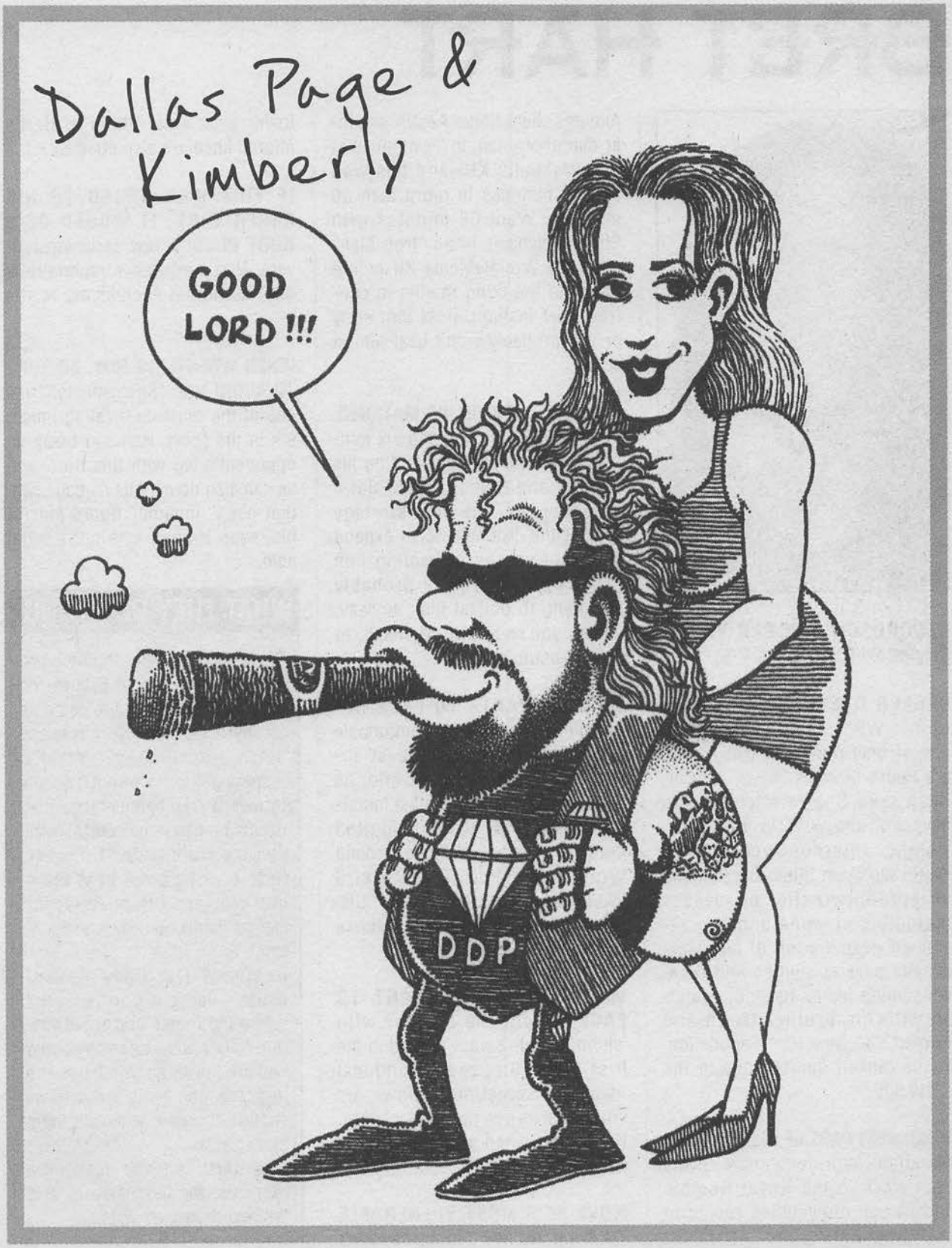
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Diamond cutter." It might be the most lethal finishing maneuver in the sport. Page has a success rate of more than 95 percent when he executes his move.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "It's amazing when you think about how far DDP has come since that day when he came to work for us down in the basement. Back then, Page was down on his luck and had absolutely no desire. I guess what people say is true: You have to hit rock bottom before you realize how much you want something."

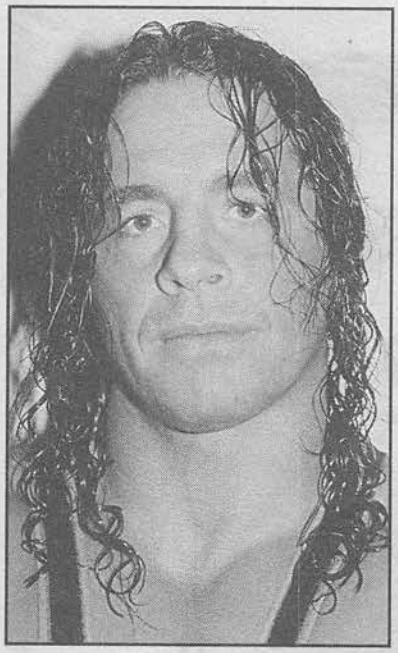
NWO rival Scott Hall: "That 'Diamond cutter' of his is one tough move, but the NWO ain't scared. Ten years from now, everyone is still gonna be talkin' about the NWO, but everyone will have forgotten all about Page."

WCW commentator Bobby Heenan: "You want to know what I think about 'Diamond' Dallas Page? Okay. I think he's a little nuts, but he has a lot of guts taking on the NWO. A lesser man would have taken the money and joined. Not DDP. He made his own move."


Dallas Page &
Kimberly
GOOD
LORD !!!
DDP

SCOUTING REPORT:

BRET HART



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 20-9; tag teams: 7-6.

CAREER OVERVIEW: Four-time former WWF World champion is one of only four men (the others are Pedro Morales, Kevin "Diesel" Nash, and Shawn Michaels) to have won the WWF World heavyweight, Intercontinental, and World tag team titles. Outstanding all-around wrestler possesses incredible stamina and has remained near the top of his game despite several injuries and time-consuming feuds. Recently reunited with his brother Owen and formed The New Hart Foundation. Twice ranked number one in the "*PWI* 500."

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Marathon man does some of his best work in the Royal Rumble and has an outstanding record in matches lasting more than 25 minutes. Beat Steve Austin, another marathon man, in 22 minutes at WrestleMania XIII and has won several matches in more than 30 minutes. Went 60 minutes with Shawn Michaels in an "Iron Man" match at WrestleMania XII before losing in the 62nd minute in controversial fashion. Beat him early or you probably won't beat him at all.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Vulnerable in the opening six minutes, when he is implementing his strategy and trying to wear down an opponent. The best strategy against the "Hitman" is to expend plenty of energy in beating him early, because you're probably not going to outlast him, anyway, unless you're Shawn Michaels or Steve Austin.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Although Hart is perfectly comfortable trading moves with the best all-around wrestlers in the world, he has scored some of his most important victories against limited brawlers such as Yokozuna (second World title reign), Diesel (third World title reign), and "Psycho" Sid. The "Hitman" easily solves those types.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Owen, the brother with whom he didn't want to feud in the first place. Bret is an emotional man who sometimes allows his emotions to get the best of him. He is best when wrestling under control.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Backbreakers and knees to the lower back area. Shots to Hart's injured knee are also effective.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A few aerial maneuvers. Hart's expansive repertoire is limited almost exclusively to the ground.

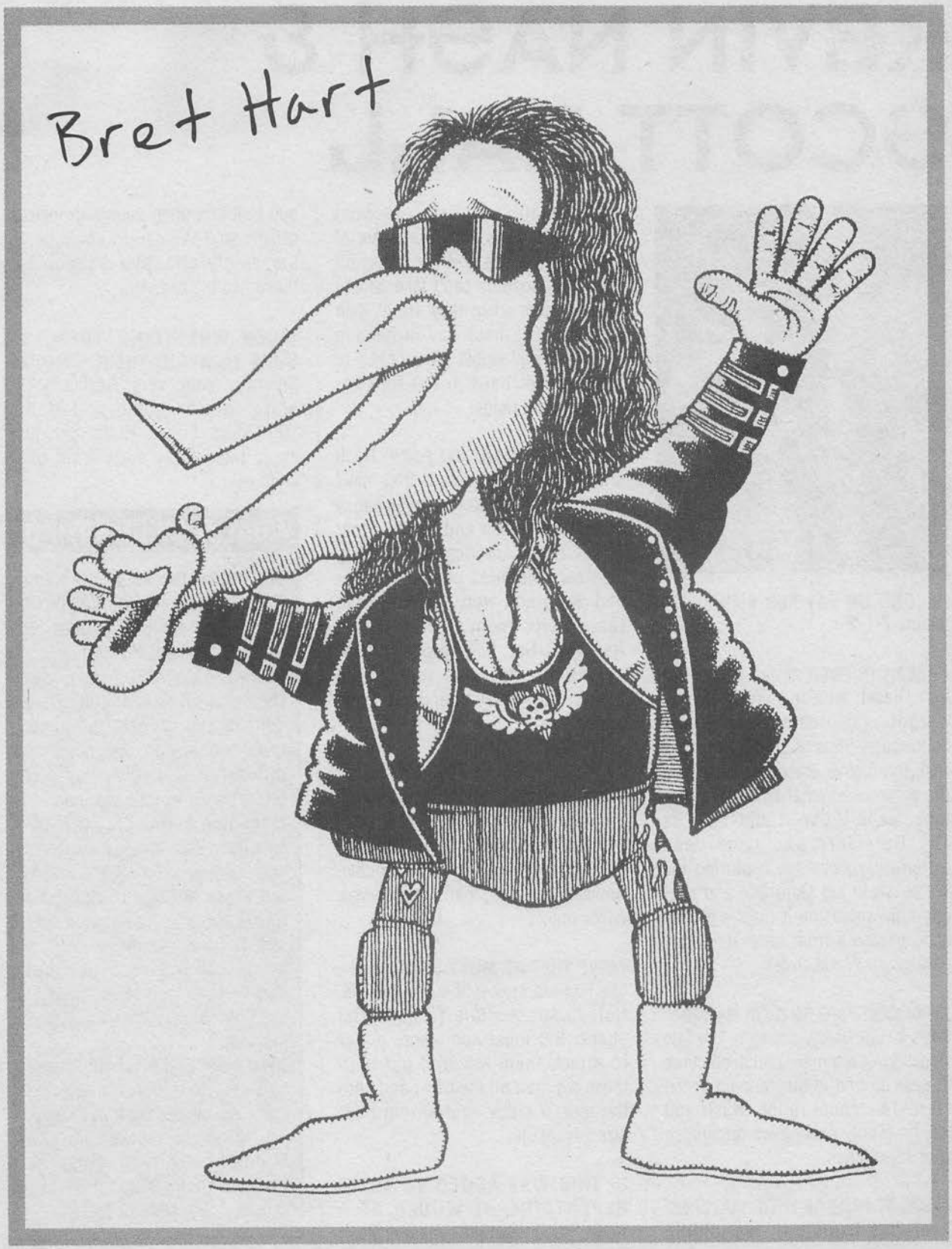
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Sharpshooter." It's one of the most devastating finishers in the sport. Hart can break an opponent's leg with this hold, and he can also do serious damage with that new "ringpost" figure-four of his, even though it is not a legal hold.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Steve Austin: "Why should I say anything good about Bret Hart? He ain't never had anything good to say about me. Do I respect him? Who cares? What's respect got to do with it? He's a former WWF champion, so that means he has to be good. To tell you the truth, I don't need to hear how he's the best there ever was, and I think everybody else is damn tired of hearing it, too."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Hart's a great wrestler with a big mouth and a bad attitude. He's also coming to the end of his line, but I get the impression he'll be smart enough to know when it's time to step away."

Bret Hart: "I'm the best there ever was, the best there is, and the best there ever will be."


Bret Hart

SCOUTING REPORT:

KEVIN NASH & SCOTT HALL



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Tag teams: 7-1-2

CAREER OVERVIEW: Nash, the former Diesel, won the World heavyweight, tag team, and Intercontinental titles in the WWF while Hall, the former Razor Ramon, won the Intercontinental title. They got together in WCW in mid-1996 as The Outsiders and have been extremely successful, capturing the WCW World tag team title and successfully defending it thanks mostly to interference from other members of the New World Order.

STRONGEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: Nash is unusually strong in the late stages for a big man. Hall needs time to gear up and is outstanding in the 10-to-15-minute range. Nash and Hall have only rarely been dominated after 15 minutes.

WEAKEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: Nash has trouble in the middle stages; Hall struggles somewhat early. Fortunately, they are aware of their weaknesses and try to tag off so that opponents can't take advantage of them when they are at their weakest. The best way of beating Nash and Hall would probably be to attack them hard in the four-to-eight-minute range.

WHO THEY WANT TO FACE: Nash and Hall proved how far they have come with their victory over cagey veterans Ric Flair and Roddy Piper at The Great American Bash. They also own victories over Lex Luger and Sting and won the World tag team belts from Harlem Heat. Nash and Hall have proven themselves against a variety of tag teams; they're at their best when tested.

WHO THEY DON'T WANT TO FACE: They've beaten scientific pairings, outbrawled brawlers, and destroyed small, talented teams. The Giant and Lex Luger have given them trouble, however, as they can't overpower either man..

MOVE THEY'RE MOST VULNERABLE TO: Nash is susceptible to leglocks. Hall is susceptible to an aerial attack. But most opponents prefer to attack them low and get both these big men off their feet and onto the mat, thereby neutralizing their size advantage.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO THEIR REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Can you imagine Nash and Hall executing double-dropkicks off the tag? We can! It could be an amazingly effective weapon for these two big brawlers.

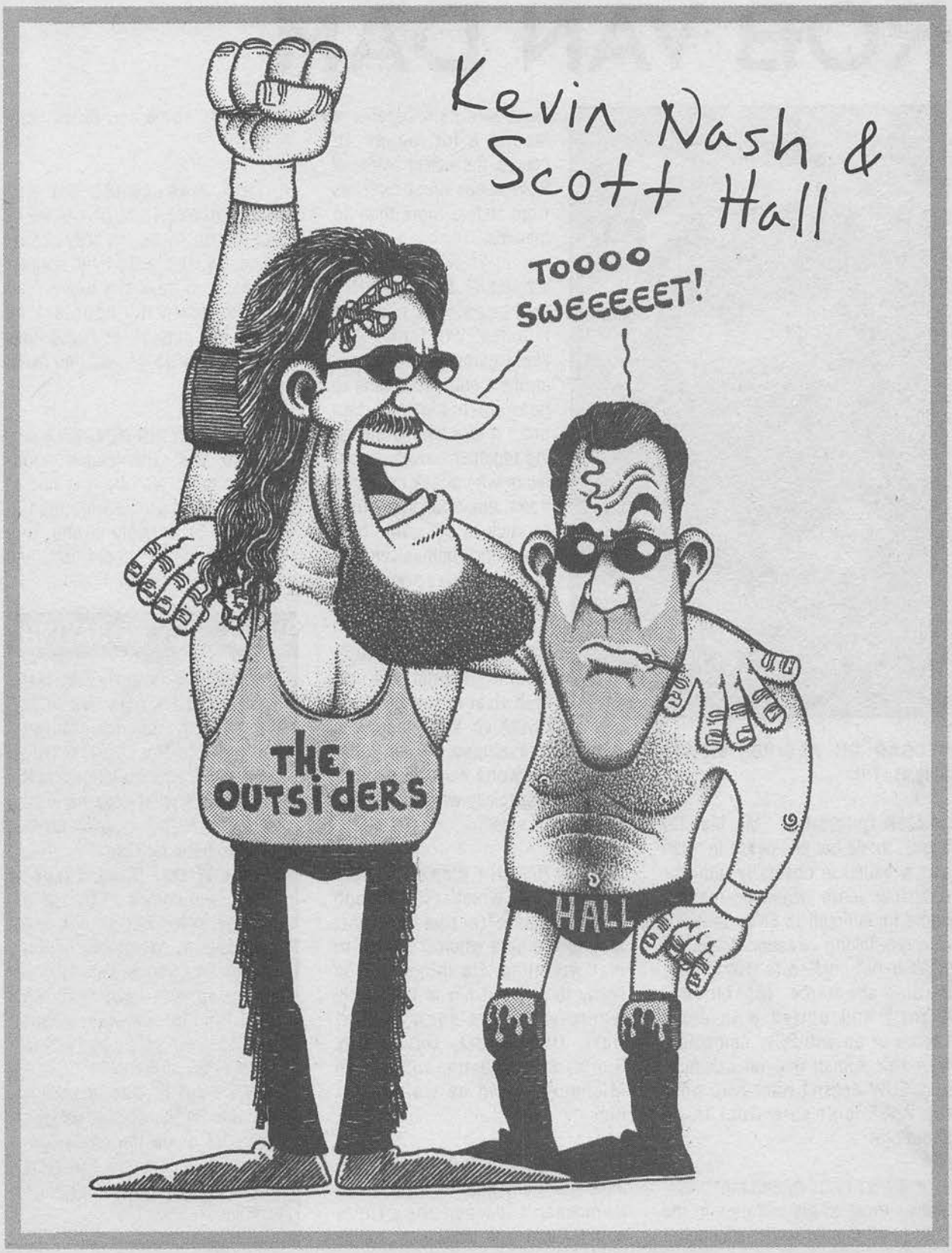
WHEN WRESTLING THEM, BE SURE TO AVOID THEIR: Patented finishing maneuvers: Nash's "jackknife" power bomb and Hall's "Outsiders' Edge." Better yet, just avoid them. Stay away from their clutches.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

WCW rival Ric Flair: "Hall and Nash would be nothing without all the interference that goes on in their matches. Yeah, they can be impressive at times, but they're a lot like Hogan: They don't defend the belts too often, and when they do, they count on interference. If they had any pride, they'd wrestle like men."

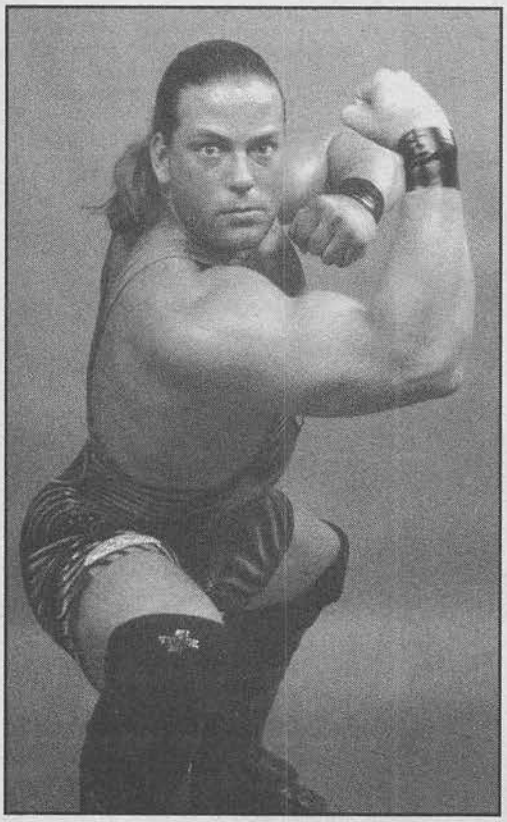
Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "You can say whatever you want about Hall and Nash, but these are two of the most impressive wrestlers in the sport. Sure, neither one is a great technical wrestler, but they've both won major titles in the WWF and WCW. That's saying a lot."

NWO head Eric Bischoff: "These two men together are as fearsome as any tag team in history. You give me teams like The Midnight Express and the Steiners? Forget about it! The Outsiders are state-of-the-art."


Kevin Nash &
Scott Hall
TOOOO
SWEEEEET!
THE
OUTSIDERS
HALL

SCOUTING REPORT:

ROB VAN DAM



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 1-0

CAREER OVERVIEW: "Mr. Monday Night" made his pro debut in 1991 and wrestled in obscurity until the past few years, when he made a name for himself in ECW as a terrific risk-taking wrestler. Made his WWF debut on *Raw Is War* in May, earning the name "Mr. Monday Night," and united with Jerry Lawler in an anti-ECW campaign. Now he's a man without a federation: ECW doesn't want him, while the WWF isn't sure what to do about him.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Scores most of his victories in the eight-to-13-minute range, although it looks as if he is capable of lasting a lot longer. Of course, the violent nature of ECW keeps most matches from lasting more than 15 minutes.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first five minutes. Van Dam looks like a gymnast in the ring at times and needs time to gear up his attack and make it effective by stringing together moves. Opponents who attack early and don't allow Van Dam time to stick to his game plan often find themselves facing a confused wrestler who lacks confidence.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Tommy Dreamer, his new arch-rival in the ECW vs. USWA vs. WWF feud. Van Dam has developed a great killer instinct and won't back down from Dreamer, especially with Lawler and Sabu on his side.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Superior mat wrestlers. Although Van Dam is effective, he isn't among the elite when it comes to mat wrestling. He might not be ready to strike it big in the WWF, where wrestlers such as Bret Hart, Owen Hart, Davey Boy Smith, Steve Austin, and Shawn Michaels would be waiting for him.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Just about any kind of suplex. Van Dam hasn't learned the proper counter and was beaten by suplex master Taz numerous times early in '97.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A belly-to-belly or vertical suplex. The best way to counter a move is to have the move. Van Dam can learn the counters by learning the suplex—and he'd have a new weapon to go with his aerial maneuvers.

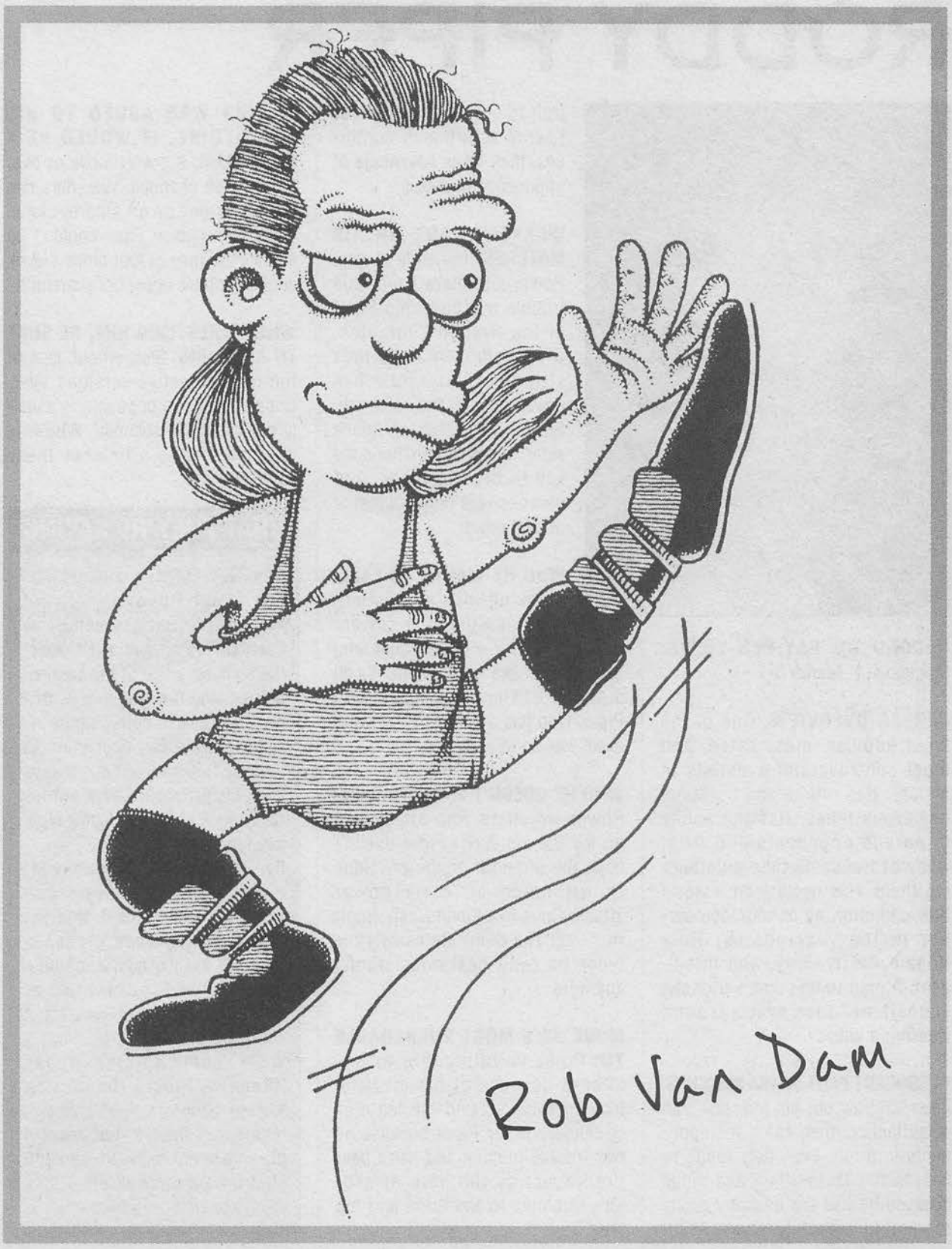
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Split-legged moonsault. Amazing. Van Dam is one of the most agile and flexible men in wrestling. Deceptively strong, too. He has tremendous upper body and arm strength.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

ECW/WWF ally Jerry Lawler: "What we have here is one of the finest up-and-coming wrestlers in the sport, a true gem. Yeah, he's no longer loyal to ECW, but what does he need them for? He's surpassed ECW. He's too good for them."

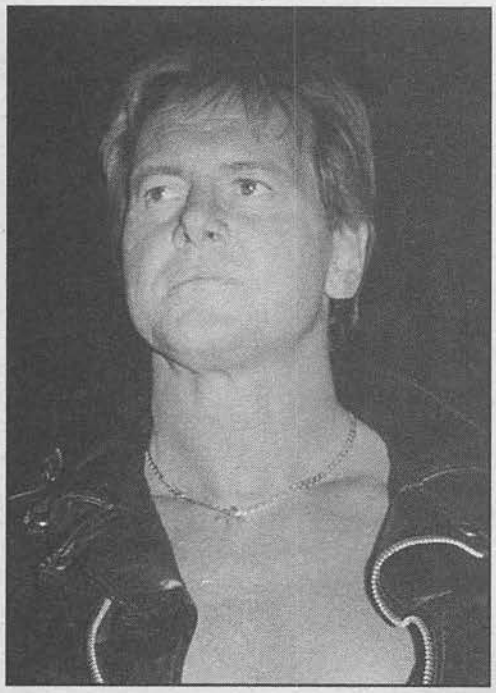
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Van Dam is a very confident person when things are going his way. When they're not, he runs into trouble fast. I think joining up with Lawler will be good for his confidence, but possibly not so good for his career in the long run."

ECW's Paul E. Dangerously: "It's time for Van Dam to pay the piper. He made the challenge. He put his head on the line. Now he has to back it up, and I don't think he can."


Rob Van Dam

SCOUTING REPORT:

RODDY PIPER



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 4-4. Teams: 1-2.

CAREER OVERVIEW: One of the most popular, most hated, and most controversial wrestlers in history. Has retired and unretired numerous times. Has the ability to enrage opponents and fans, while at the same time entertaining them. Has never won a world title, although he came close earlier in the year against Hulk Hogan. Crafty, wily, and intelligent. A man to be taken seriously, even if he does walk around wearing a kilt.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Likes to draw out his matches with delay tactics, then catch his opponents in a lull. Extremely tough to beat in the 15-to-20-minute range because he has the uncanny ability to remain mentally sharp at all points of his matches. Learns as a match continues, then takes advantage of opponents' mistakes.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The early stages. Power wrestlers have little trouble overpowering Piper in the first five minutes, when both men are at their strongest. Strength has never been the "Rowdy Scot's" greatest asset. Attack early, attack often. That's the key to beating Piper. And never engage him in a test of mental power.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Thinking men's wrestlers such as Sting and current rival Ric Flair. Power wrestlers who gear up late, like Hulk Hogan. It's all a matter of time and space with Piper, who has a knack for knowing exactly when to strike.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Power wrestlers who attack and go for the kill early. Piper doesn't have the strength or the physique to withstand an early power attack. Guys like Kevin Nash, Scott Hall, and The Giant are exactly the types he can't beat consistently anymore.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Piper is vulnerable to low attacks because of his artificial hip. Anything around the leg area is dangerous for Piper because he has trouble moving and can't bear the impact or the pain of prolonged blows to the thigh and hip area.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A power move or two. Times have changed. Wrestlers can no longer get by on smarts alone. There's no reason Piper couldn't go into a gym three or four times a week and develop his upper body strength.

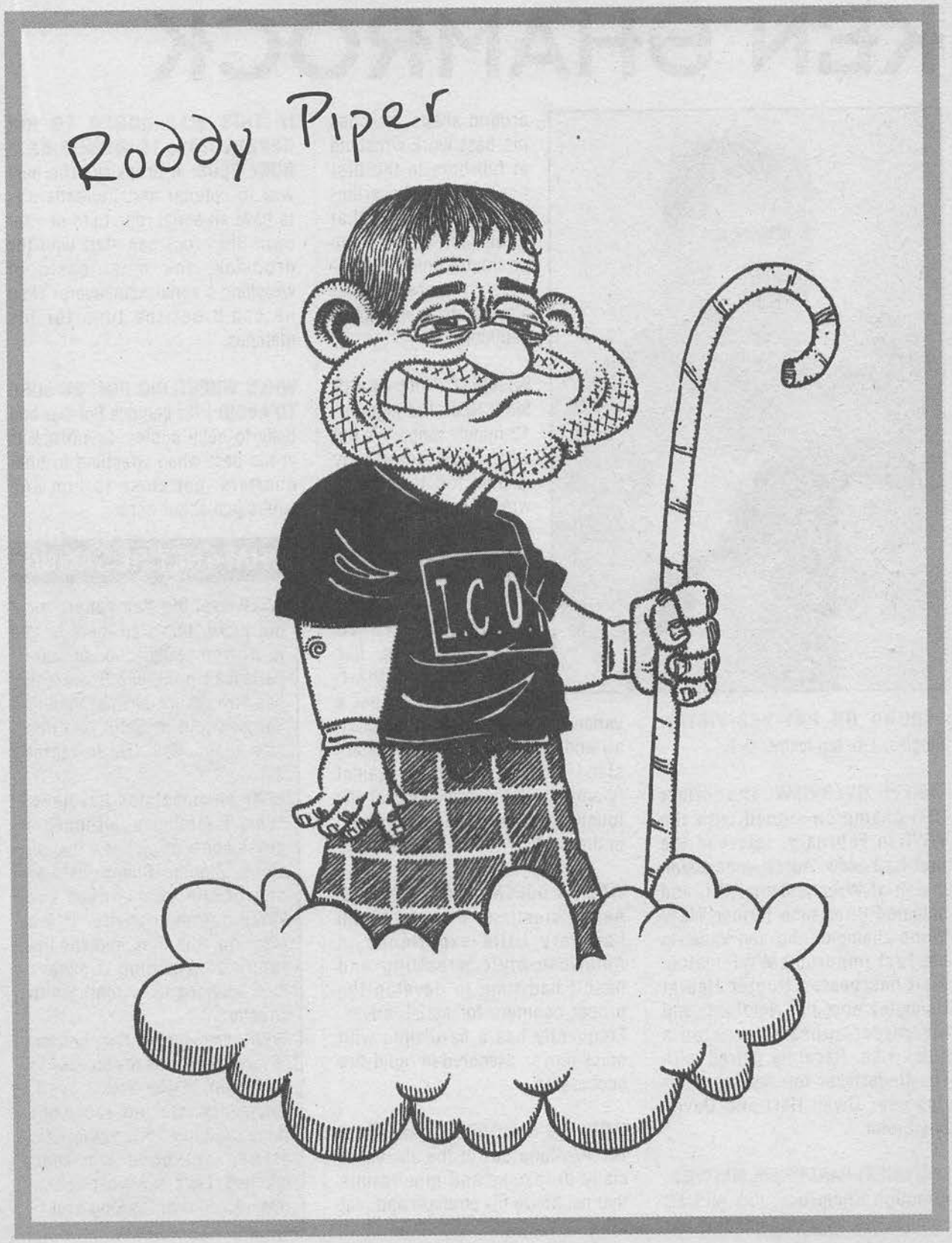
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Sleeperhold. One of the most effective versions ever. Once applied, an opponent is usually out within 30 seconds. Who else can use this as a finisher these days?

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Rival Ric Flair: "I could talk all day about Roddy Piper, but instead I'll just say what I've been saying all along: I respect the man. He's one of the greatest of all-time. The problem is that he doesn't have both oars in the water. His elevator doesn't go all the way to the top. That's always been his problem. Check out his record. What's he won? Now you know why."

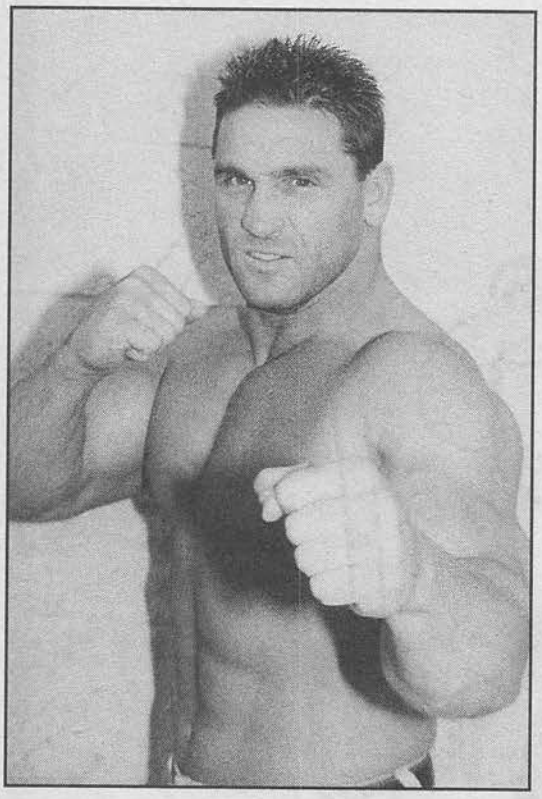
Senior Editor Bill Apter: "Roddy is an all-time great in his own way. I guess you could say he is the most colorful wrestler in history. He always has something to say and he has a colorful way of saying it. The man has a lot of charisma."

WCW commentator Bobby Heenan: "Piper? He's crazy. Always been crazy, always will be crazy. Talented, but crazy. I think he ought to keep his mouth shut a little more often. That's always been his big problem."


Roddy Piper
I.C.O.

SCOUTING REPORT:

KEN SHAMROCK



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 1-0; tag teams: 0-1.

CAREER OVERVIEW: The former UFC champion signed with the WWF in February, refereed the Bret Hart-Steve Austin submission match at WrestleMania XIII, and defeated three-time former WCW World champion Big Van Vader in his first important WWF match. Also has beaten Hunter Hearst Helmsley and Jim Neidhart, and his career appears to be on a quick rise. Recently paired with The Undertaker for several victories over Owen Hart and Davey Boy Smith.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Although Shamrock, like all UFC combatants, is in outstanding all-around shape, he does his best work wrestling at full-bore in the first five minutes. Nevertheless, we believe that Shamrock would have no trouble going 20 minutes or more against almost any type of competition.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The eight-to-13-minute range. It's not what Shamrock's body is built for. He likes to wrestle hard early, take a middle breather, then come back strong after about 15 minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Brawlers like Vader and Neidhart. Unless a wrestler has a varied repertoire of scientific, aerial, and power moves, he doesn't stand much of a chance against Shamrock. Considered one of the toughest and most dangerous men in the world.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Aerial wrestlers. Shamrock still has very little experience in American-style wrestling and hasn't had time to develop the proper counters for aerial moves. Frequently has a hard time with quick moves executed in rapid-fire succession.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Anything out of the air, especially dropkicks and moonsaults that neutralize his strength and mat skills.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A dropkick. The best way to counter aerial wrestlers is to have an aerial repertoire of your own. Shamrock can start with the dropkick, the most basic of wrestling's aerial maneuvers. Then he could set the tone for his matches.

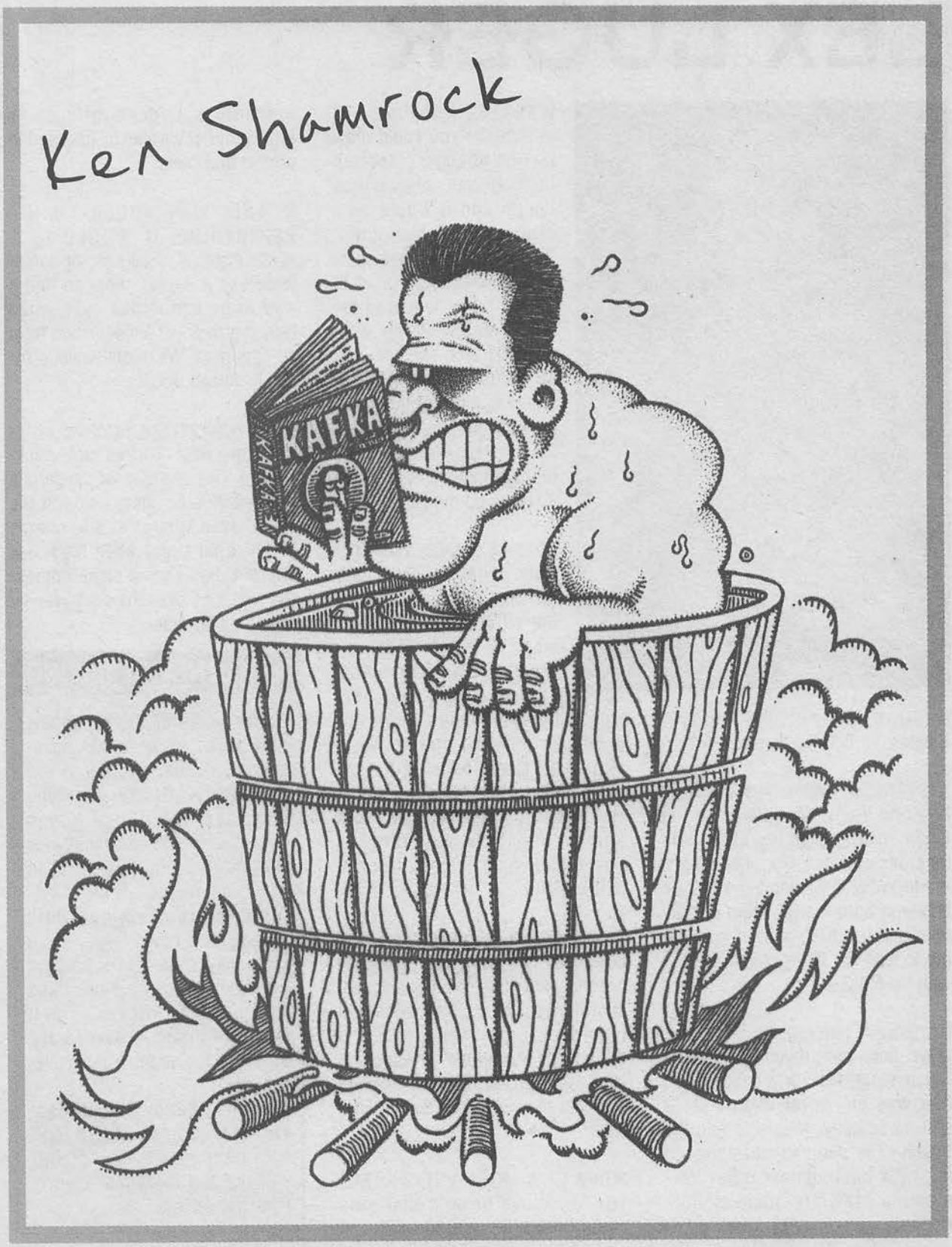
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Leglock finisher and belly-to-belly suplex. Shamrock is at his best when wrestling in tight quarters; get close to him and you're just about done.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

WWF rival Big Van Vader: "He got lucky, that's all there is to it. Do you really think an inexperienced punk like Shamrock has any chance against Vader? Forget about it! Send him this way again. He'll live to regret it."

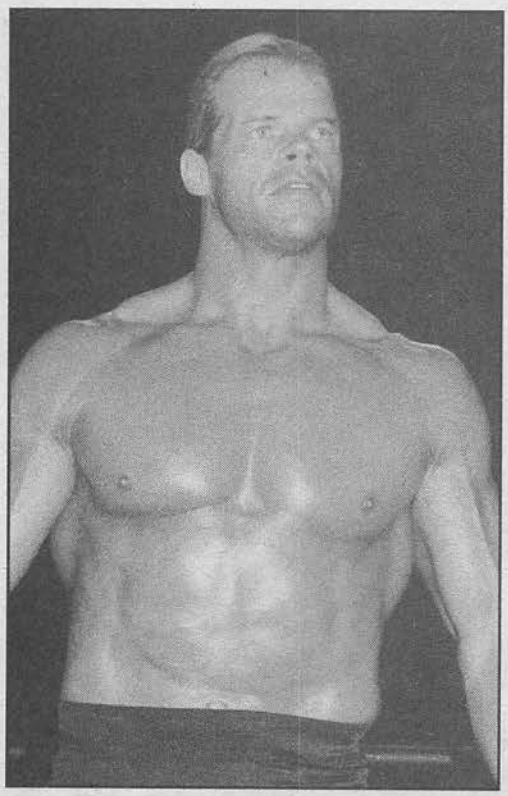
WWF commentator Jim Ross: "Very impressive, although I guess some of us knew that all along. Signing Shamrock was one of the best moves the WWF has ever made. It's a move for the fans and for the future of wrestling. I always look forward to watching him wrestle."

WWF commentator Jerry Lawler: "Everybody thinks it's so easy to be a star in the WWF. Well, Shamrock started fast, but there's a long list of men who started out good and then crashed. Let's see what Shamrock can do over the long haul."


Ken Shamrock
KAFKA

SCOUTING REPORT:

LEX LUGER



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 15-8-1; tag teams: 2-6-2

CAREER OVERVIEW: Though Luger has one WCW World title to his credit, many say he has never lived up to his potential. But since returning to WCW in September 1995, he has won both the tag team and TV titles and has been praised for helping to lead the WCW side in its war with the NWO.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Luger hasn't improved his stamina much since his early days, when that was his worst weakness. It still is, actually. Needs to end his matches as soon as possible and is at his best against other low-stamina brawlers such as Hulk Hogan.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: You could draw a chart of Luger's success in matches of various length and it would be a diagonal line, going down. Best in the first five minutes, not quite as good in the next five, worse in the next five, etc. Rarely wins once a match extends over 15 minutes, almost never beats quality wrestlers in matches lasting more than 20 minutes. Knee and back injuries haven't helped his ability to go the distance.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Hulk Hogan, badly. Luger earned a title match against the WCW World champion when he won a four-way match at Spring Stampede. Then he went and beat Hogan by submission in an impromptu non-title match. More than ever, Luger believes he has the ability to win the World title. Has done some of his best work against big brawlers such as Yokozuna (whom he bodyslammed in the WWF).

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Sting. Jeff Jarrett. Dallas Page. Any wrestler with stamina and an above-average technical, mat, or aerial repertoire. Luger wants to get in there and fight. When an opponent wants to wrestle, he's in trouble. Was never able to handle Ric Flair well.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Any move or hold that puts strain on his oft-injured left knee. Sometimes Luger's offense is thrown out of whacks by his need to protect that knee.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A superkick, or something like it. Luger needs to find a way to be dangerous even when he's at arm's—or leg's—reach from an opponent. We're still waiting for that piledriver, too, Lex.

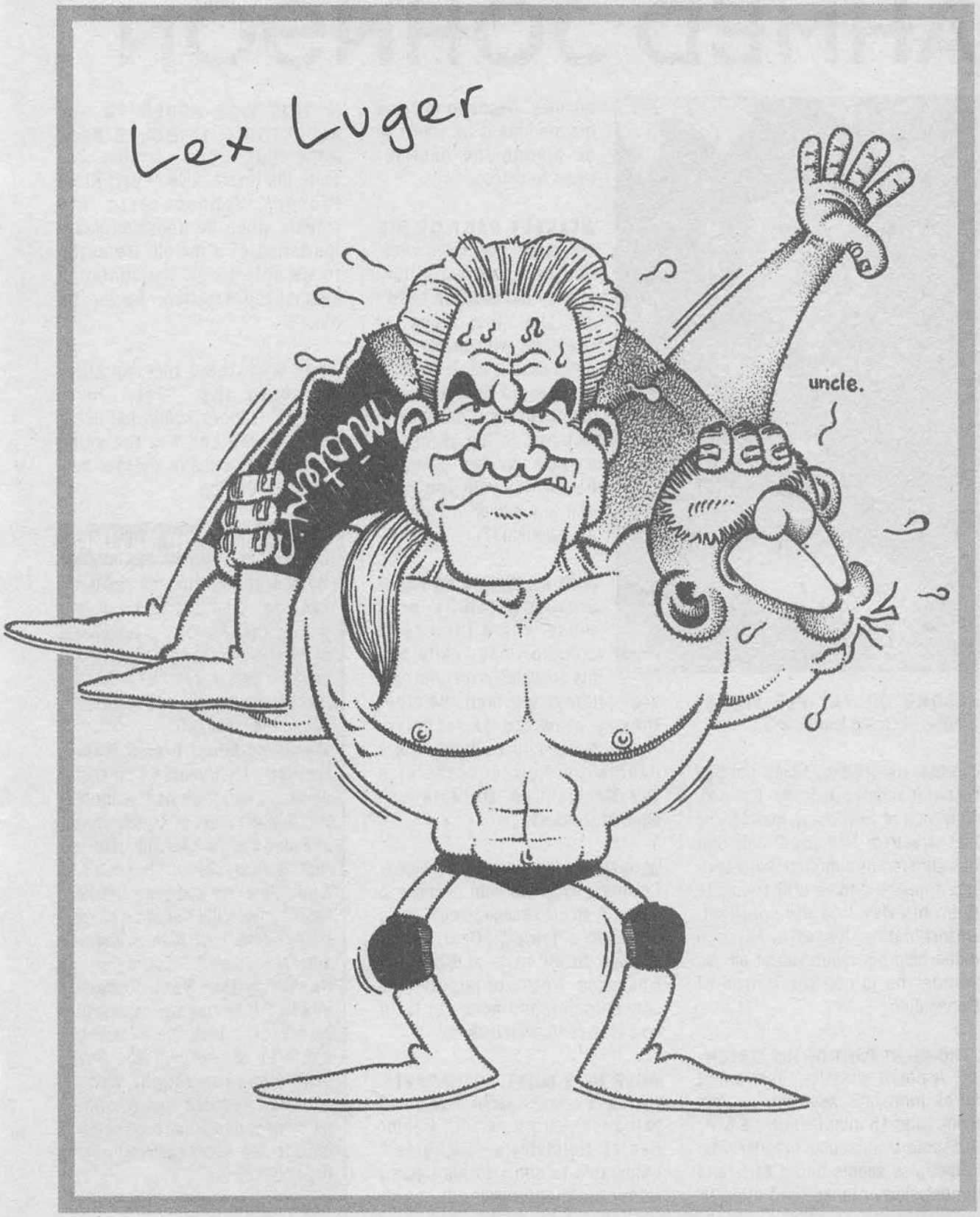
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Torture rack" backbreaker. One of the most dangerous and effective finishing holds in the sport, even though it sometimes backfires on Luger when his knees give out. Has scored some impressive victories over the past year by relying on the "rack."

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "The 'Total Package' has never been in a better position to win the WCW World title. The thing is, Luger better hope Hogan doesn't lose it to somebody else with more technical skill. Then he'd be in trouble."

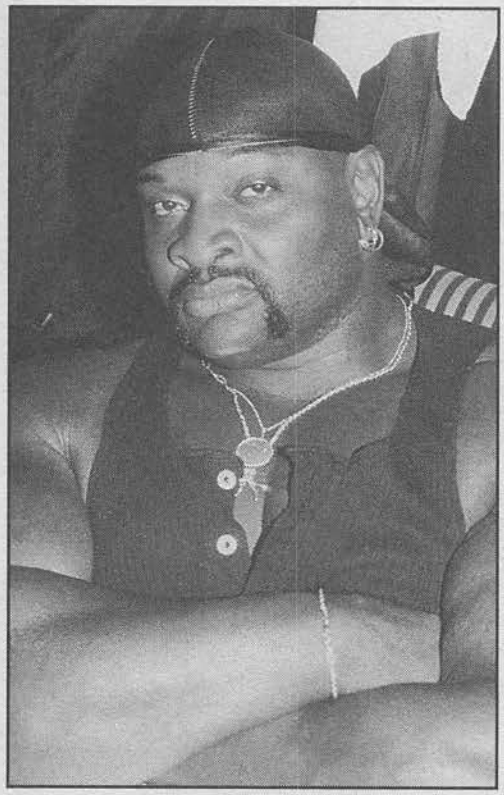
WCW World champion Hulk Hogan: "I've heard Luger crowing because he thinks he beat me once. Well, I have one thing to say to him: That wasn't even an official match. I never agreed to it. It didn't count. You'll never beat me."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "Luger still hasn't shown me he can consistently win the big matches. I don't think he ever will."


Lex Luger
uncle.

SCOUTING REPORT:

AHMED JOHNSON



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 4-2; tag teams: 2-3

CAREER OVERVIEW: Check out that record in singles matches. Not bad. Now look at how many matches he has wrestled. Not good. Johnson has suffered through too many serious injuries and is still trying to push his way into the spotlight. Unfortunately, losses to Faarooq didn't help his reputation at all. No wonder he joined the Nation of Domination.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: A donut wrestler—just about all of Johnson's key matches last from 10 to 15 minutes. He's a 6'4", 305-pound muscular brawler who sometimes seems bored early and almost always looks tired after 15 minutes. Needs to improve his stamina if he wants to be among the best for years to come.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Has never wrestled in a true marathon, mostly because he hasn't wrestled the types of wrestlers who prefer long matches, but partly because he tries so hard to avoid long matches. Continues to struggle in tag team and six-man matches (although he did well with The Road Warriors earlier in the year; who wouldn't?).

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Smaller wrestlers, even those with a little skill. Johnson has really had his troubles over the past year against big men, whether they're brawlers or technical types. We're still trying to get a handle on how successful a wrestler he'll be. Did fare well against Goldust.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Scientific wrestlers with stamina to spare. A smart wrestler would avoid Johnson's feared "Pearl River Plunge" at all costs and get him frustrated. Needs to improve his concentration and needs to learn how to pace himself better.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Can't counter aerial moves and had a real hard time with Hunter Hearst Helmsley's "pedigree." Vulnerable to shots to his injured kidney and knee as well.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Some stamina. Despite his impressive "Pearl River Plunge," Johnson gets into trouble when he doesn't dictate the terms of a match. He needs to be able to go the distance against top wrestlers. So far, he hasn't.

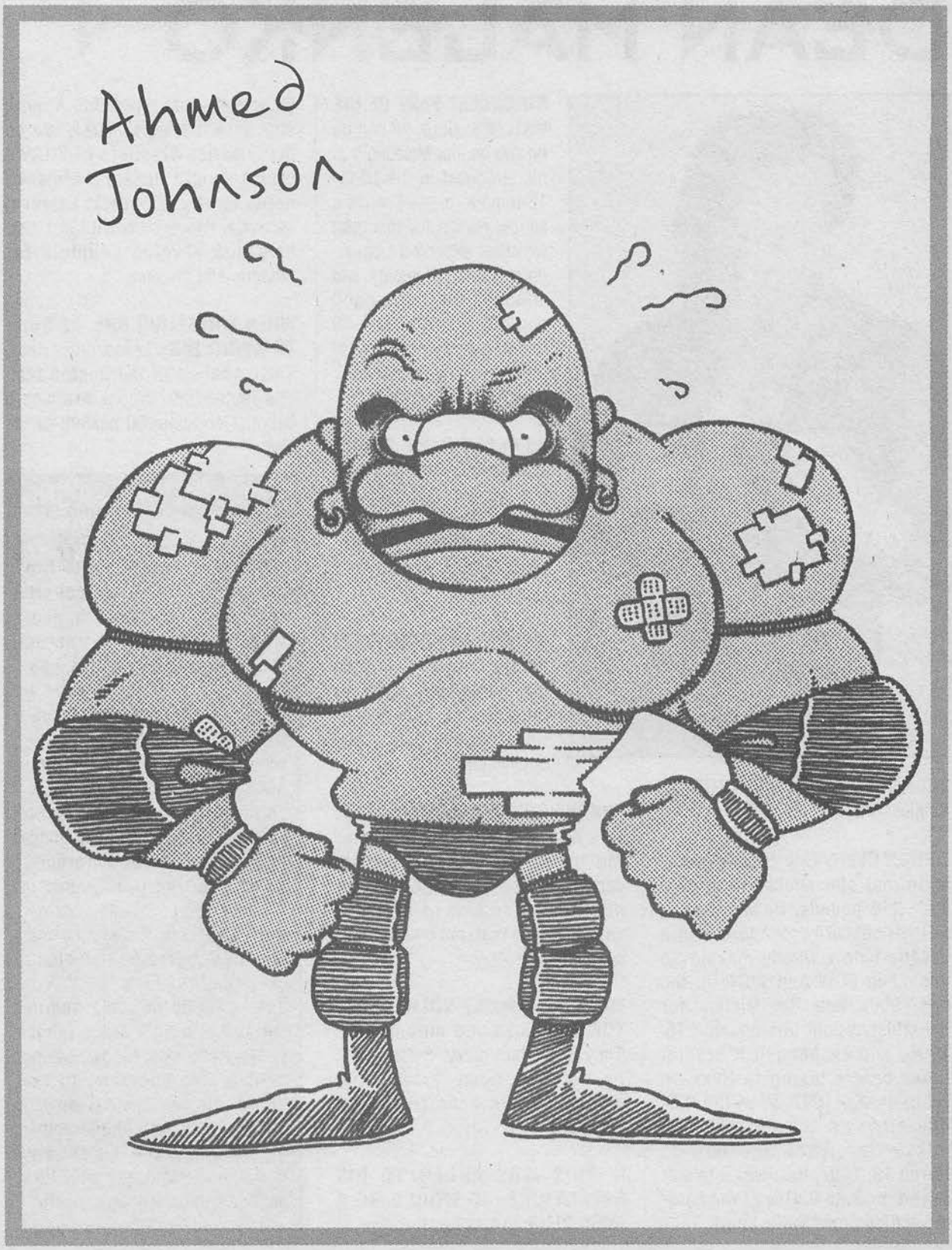
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Pearl River Plunge." It looks somewhat like a power bomb and has the same effect. It's rare that a wrestler survives its execution.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Nation of Domination cohort Faarooq: "You just watch, now that brother Ahmed's a member of the Nation of Domination, he's going to be the best he can be. I have no doubt that he's a superstar in the making."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "Last year, I said that Johnson was one of the most exciting wrestlers to come along in a long time. Well, I still believe that, and he did win the Intercontinental title last year, but he hasn't been quite the same since he suffered that kidney injury against Faarooq."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Johnson's a one-shot wonder who took the wrestling world by storm and was fine until everyone caught up to him. Now he's just another mid-level wrestler who'll make an impact, but never again win the big one."


Ahmed
Johnson

SCOUTING REPORT:

DEAN MALENKO



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 6-3

CAREER OVERVIEW: Second generation mat star checks in at only 5'9", 216 pounds. He wrestled in relative obscurity for more than a decade before finally making an impact in ECW and WCW in the mid-1990s. Beat Rey Misterio for the cruiserweight title on June 16, 1996, and exchanged it several times before losing to Syxx on February 23, 1997. Won the U.S. title—that's a heavyweight belt, folks—from Eddy Guerrero on March 16, 1997, then lost it to Jeff Jarrett on June 9. One of the hardest-working men in the sport.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Sure, he can go on and on, but Malenko is at his strongest in the 10-to-18-minute range. There's a simple reason for that: Mat wrestlers expend a tremendous amount of energy, and although they're in good enough shape to last 30 minutes or more, many of them can't wrestle at their peak for long periods.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The opening five minutes. Malenko isn't strong enough to win a brawl and needs time to uncover his opponent's weaknesses.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Inferior brawlers ... solid mat wrestlers such as Chris Benoit, Lord Steven Regal, Bobby Eaton, and Eddy Guerrero.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Has had a tough time with Rey Misterio Jr., Ultimo Dragon, and Jeff Jarrett. Aerial wrestlers give him the most trouble because he prefers to wrestle on the mat, not on the ropes or in the air.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Dropkicks and moonsaults. They make him dizzy. By the way, he has won some brawls, but almost always against smaller wrestlers.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A few aerial moves to go with his mat repertoire. A quick superkick, perhaps? There are so many aerial wrestlers in WCW's cruiserweight division. Malenko needs to vary his attack. Learning an aerial move or two might also help him develop counters for Misterio and the rest.

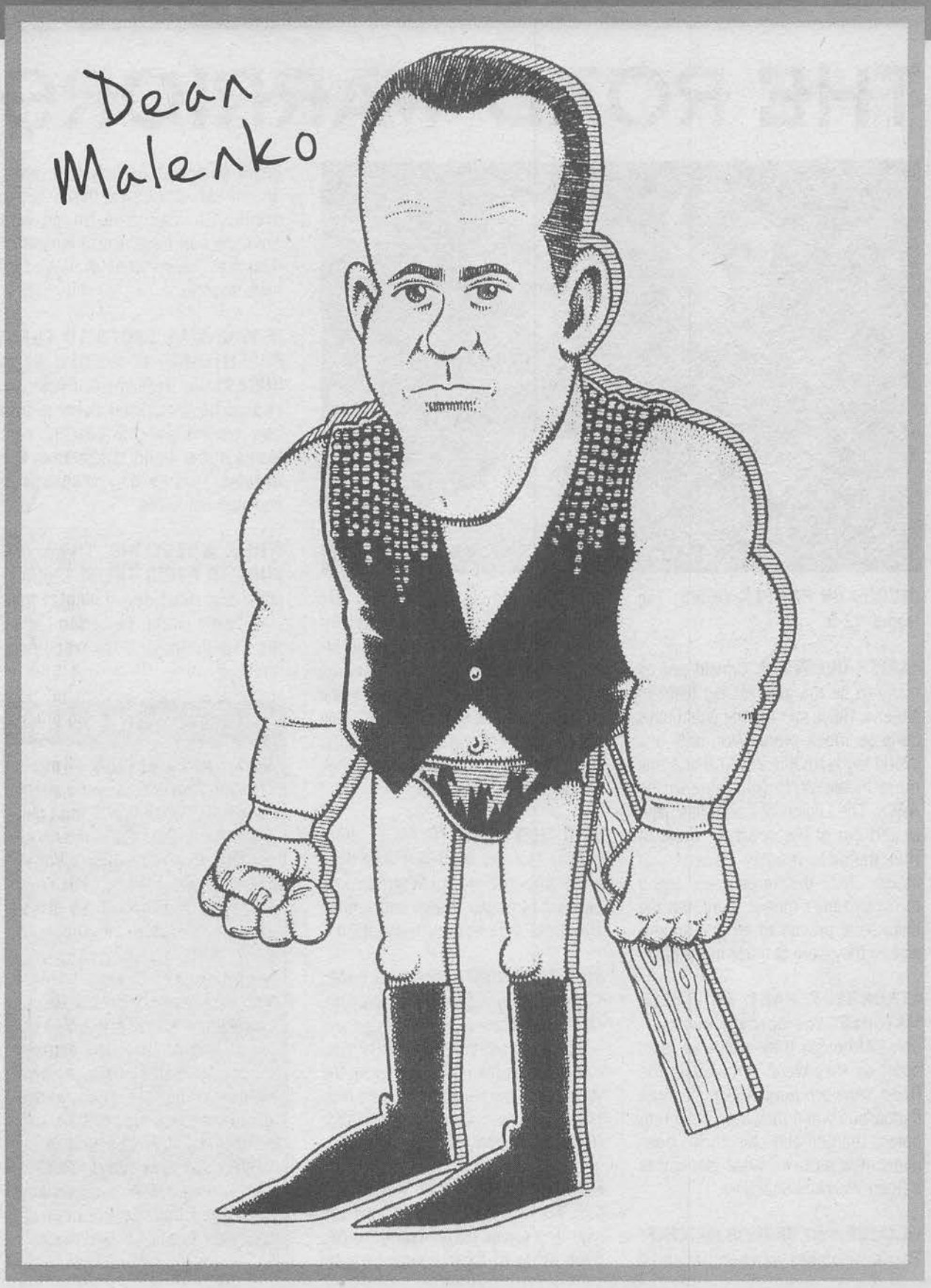
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Texas cloverleaf. This variation of the Boston crab and figure-four leglock leads to a submission about 90 percent of the time.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

WCW rival Jeff Jarrett: "I respect him, but I've beaten him, so you can take whatever you want from that. He's a good wrestler, lots of talent, but he can't compete with the big guns. I can."

WCW commentator Bobby Heenan: "Malenko's a heckuva wrestler and he's tough, just like his father, Boris. You know, some people just don't know when to give up, and Malenko's one of them. Maybe that's good. He has finally made an impact in this federation."

Publisher Stu Saks: "To me, Malenko represents all that's good about today's WCW. You don't have to be a big man to succeed. The U.S. title has historically been a bigger man's belt, a steppingstone to the World title. Well, Malenko is a former U.S. champion, so that means he was only a step away from the World title. I think he'll get that belt back soon enough."


Dear
Malenko

SCOUTING REPORT:

THE ROAD WARRIORS



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Tag teams: 12-5

CAREER OVERVIEW: Considered by many to be the greatest tag team of all-time, Hawk and Animal could have done so much more. Won only one World tag team title in WCW and one more in the WWF (plus one in the AWA). The Legion of Doom has been in and out of the sport for most of this decade, mostly because of injuries. Now they're back and trying to reclaim their former glory, but the belts have proven to be just as elusive as they were at times in the past.

STRONGEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: The opening two minutes. Although they aren't as fearsome as they were in the past, The Road Warriors remain at their most dangerous when they storm the ring before the bell and stun their opponents. The early surprise element is a Road Warriors specialty.

WEAKEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: The latter stages. Anything after 10 minutes. Hawk and Animal are impressive physical specimens, but that's all muscle, not anaerobic fitness. They expend so much energy trying to finishing off matches in the first five minutes that if they fail, they barely have enough left for the long haul. With their power usurped, they are extremely vulnerable.

WHO THEY WANT TO FACE: Other power teams. No team has ever been able to beat the Warriors in a fair test of power. Hawk and Animal win those matches on all counts.

WHO THEY DON'T WANT TO FACE: Skilled teams with a lot of stamina. Duos with impressive and varied scientific repertoires. Opponents who can think on their feet and avoid the Warriors in the early stages. The New Hart Foundation should cause fits for Hawk and Animal.

MOVE THEY'RE MOST VULNERABLE TO: Anything that attacks the legs and lower body. The Warriors have most of their power in their upper bodies, especially their arms and chest. Stay away from those areas. Go after the knees and Animal's bad back. Get them off of their feet. That's when the Warriors have trouble.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO THEIR REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Realism. The Warriors should have realized by now that they are not going to beat the best teams in the world in less than five minutes. They need to be smarter in pacing themselves.

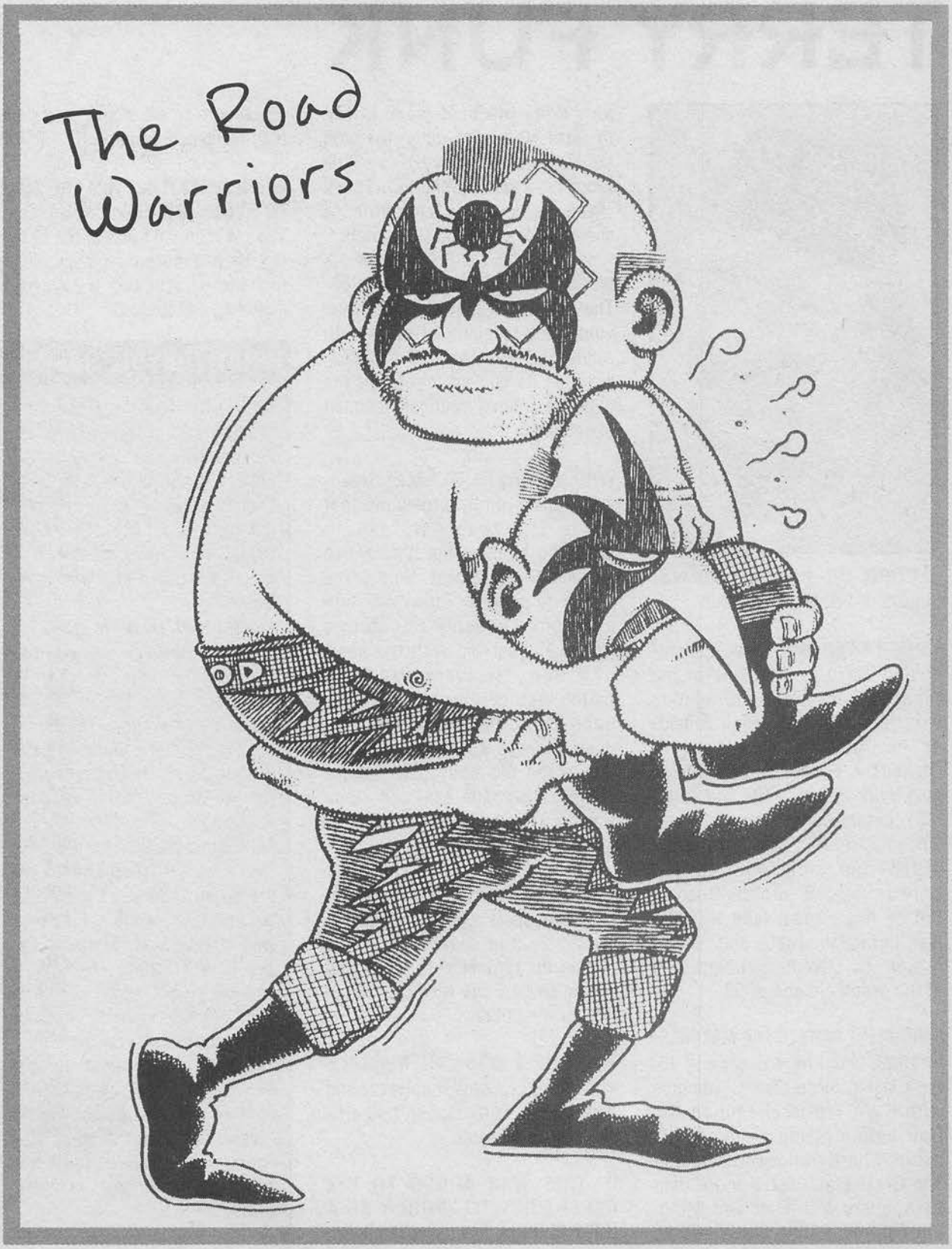
WHEN WRESTLING THEM, BE SURE TO AVOID THEIR: Clotheslines. The most devastating of their kind in the world. Powerful. Lethal. It's usually impact, then one-two-three.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "Do the Warriors have the ability to win the WWF World tag team title? Sure. Do I think they'll do it? No. Why not? Because they rarely won the belts when they were at the peaks of their careers. Why should they win now, when they've slipped a notch or two?"

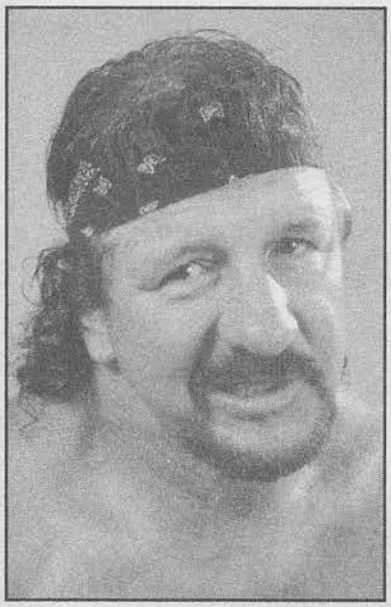
WWF commentator Jim Ross: "You have to be impressed by Hawk and Animal. They're the most impressive power team of all-time. They can *still* win any given match on any given day against any given opponent."

WWF rival Bret Hart: "They're big, strong, and stupid. Big and strong is good. Stupid neutralizes both assets."


The Road Warriors

SCOUTING REPORT:

TERRY FUNK



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 1-1-1; tag teams: 2-3.

CAREER OVERVIEW: First, consider that Terry Funk is one of the toughest and most courageous wrestlers in history. Then consider his pay-per-view record. Obviously, Funk did most of his best work in the 1970s and early-'80s, before the pay-per-view era, when he won the NWA World title (1975) and, along with brother Dory Jr., feuded with the Briscos. But he had a great feud with Ric Flair in the late-1980s and recently won the ECW heavyweight title at the grand old age of 53.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: In 1989, when he was a mere 45, Funk lasted more than 17 minutes with NWA World champion Ric Flair before losing a memorable battle. Shortly afterward, he and The Great Muta lasted more than 21 minutes with Flair and Sting. But Funk is getting older, and he now does his best work in the three-to-10-minute range (he won the ECW title from Raven in a little more than seven minutes). That's when Funk is still capable of wrestling at close to full strength.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first few minutes, when he is vulnerable to being overpowered. Anything more than 15 minutes, because he can no longer go the distance against younger, talented opponents.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Brawlers. Funk proudly proclaims that he is the toughest man in wrestling history, and it's hard to argue with that boast. He has the record to prove it. Brawl with him and Funk suddenly transforms into a 30-year-old with the heart of a lion. "If every wrestling match was held in a bar," Funk once said, "I'd never lose." Indeed, there is a lot of butt-kickin' left in the old body. Give him a ladder, a garbage can, and some barbed wire, and Funk is right at home.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Quick wrestlers who can wear him out early and make him move around the ring. Finesse types who refuse to let Funk turn the match into an all-out brawl.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Leg takedowns, suplexes, and dropkicks. Funk doesn't like to chase his opponents.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A little speed. Funk is a dinosaur in an era of speedsters and high-flying daredevils.

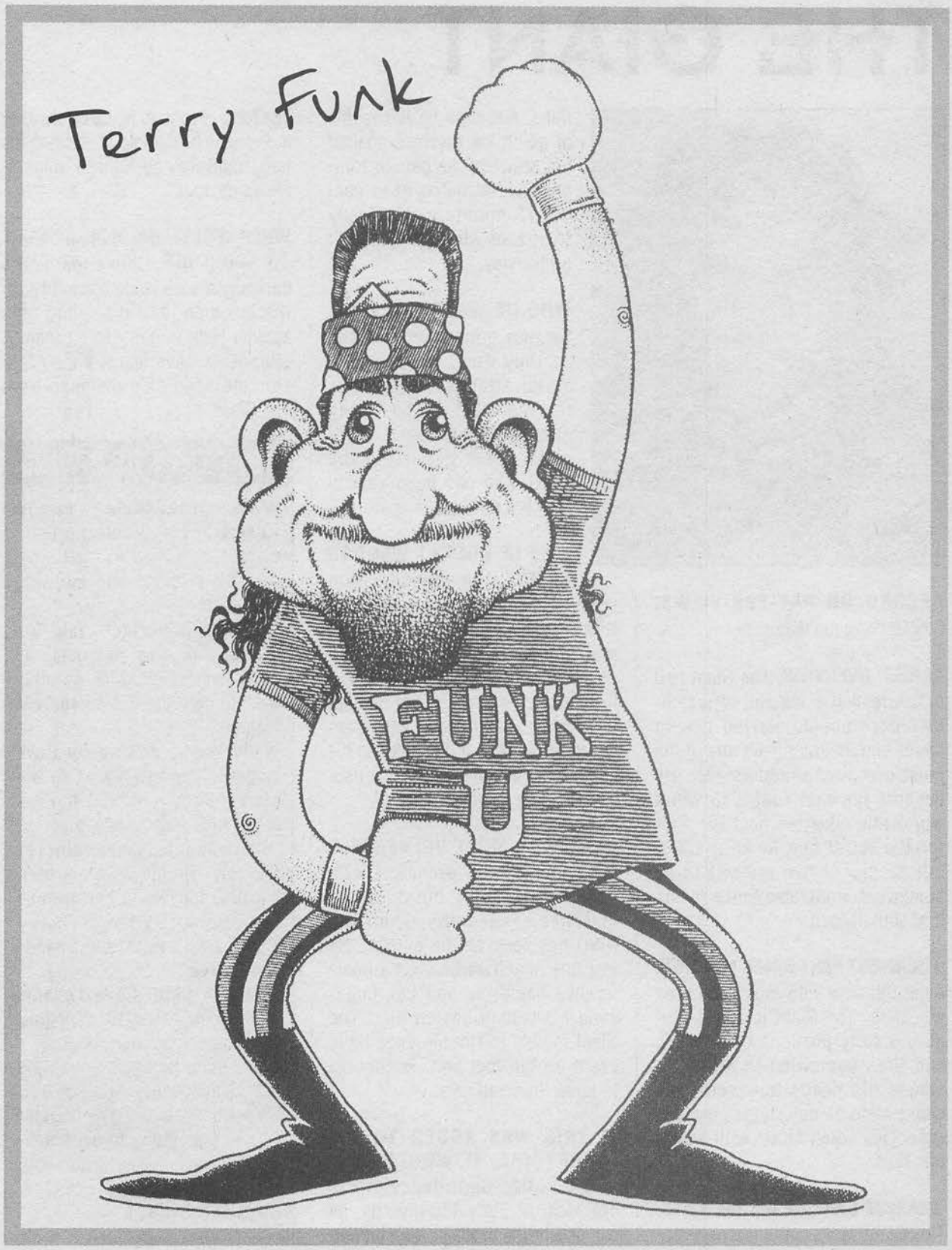
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Spinning toehold. The old man isn't just about brawling. He has more than a few finishing moves tucked away, too, including a moonsault.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

ECW ally Tommy Dreamer: "Terry's one of the great ones. I'm proud to say I know him. I know a lot of people said I was stupid to step aside so he could get that one last shot at the ECW title, but I knew what I was doing. I was making way for a legend."

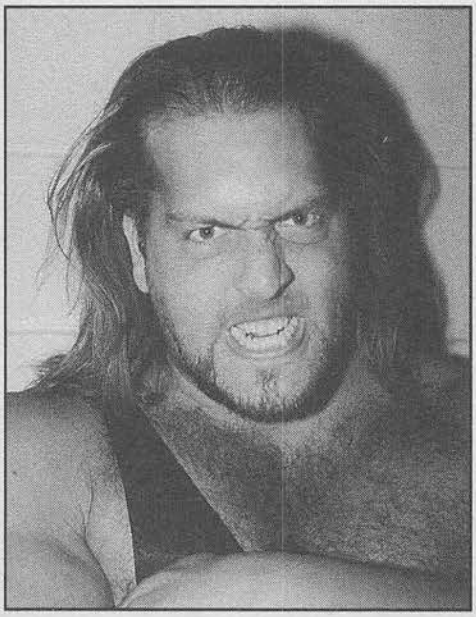
Former NWA rival Ric Flair: "Of course I respect Terry Funk. Always have and always will. We had some great feuds, which I always won, of course, but the one thing I'll always say is that he never backs down. Never. He's a man's man of wrestling."

Contributing Editor Matt Brock: "Funk is a throwback to an era when men were men and the sport was about who could kick whose butt. These days, you have all these high-flyers and technical wrestlers, but back then, you had men like Funk who didn't feel as if they had put in an honest night's work unless there was a pint of blood dripping from their foreheads. That's what the sport was all about, and it's what Funk has always been about."


Terry Funk
FUNK
U

SCOUTING REPORT:

THE GIANT



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 4-3; tag teams: 3-1

CAREER OVERVIEW: The Giant had only wrestled a handful of matches before people started talking about him as potentially one of the most dominant wrestlers ever. He became the first rookie to win a world title when he beat Ric Flair for the WCW belt in April 1996, but he has shown himself to be somewhat vulnerable since losing it to Hulk Hogan.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: As is the case with most oversized wrestlers, The Giant is at his best during early portions of matches and tires somewhat in the latter stages. He needs to execute his choke-slam as quickly as possible, especially when faced with scientific foes.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The Giant lacks patience and stamina. Although he is capable of going the distance against big brawlers, he gets in trouble once a match goes past the 15-minute mark. Easily frustrated when things don't go his way.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Smaller opponents, as long as they don't have strong aerial attacks. Fortunately for The Giant, he has faced mostly other big men, especially since departing the NWO, and has been able to pick his spots.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Large wrestlers with strong scientific or aerial skills. The Giant gets into trouble when he starts chasing an opponent and wears down fairly easily. Unfortunately, he isn't mature enough to know when to chase and when not to chase. And if he can't use his intimidation factor early on, he usually runs into trouble.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Outside interference. That's how he has lost most of his matches, especially when the NWO has been on the outside. He lost one match when Sting's interference backfired and Lex Luger used a baseball bat on him. The Giant is also in trouble once he is down on the mat and susceptible to lower-body attacks.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Confidence in his dropkick. At 7'4", 430-pounds, he can deliver the dropkick with incredible force. Problem is, he rarely uses it. Perhaps he's afraid of missing his target and leaving himself vulnerable on the mat.

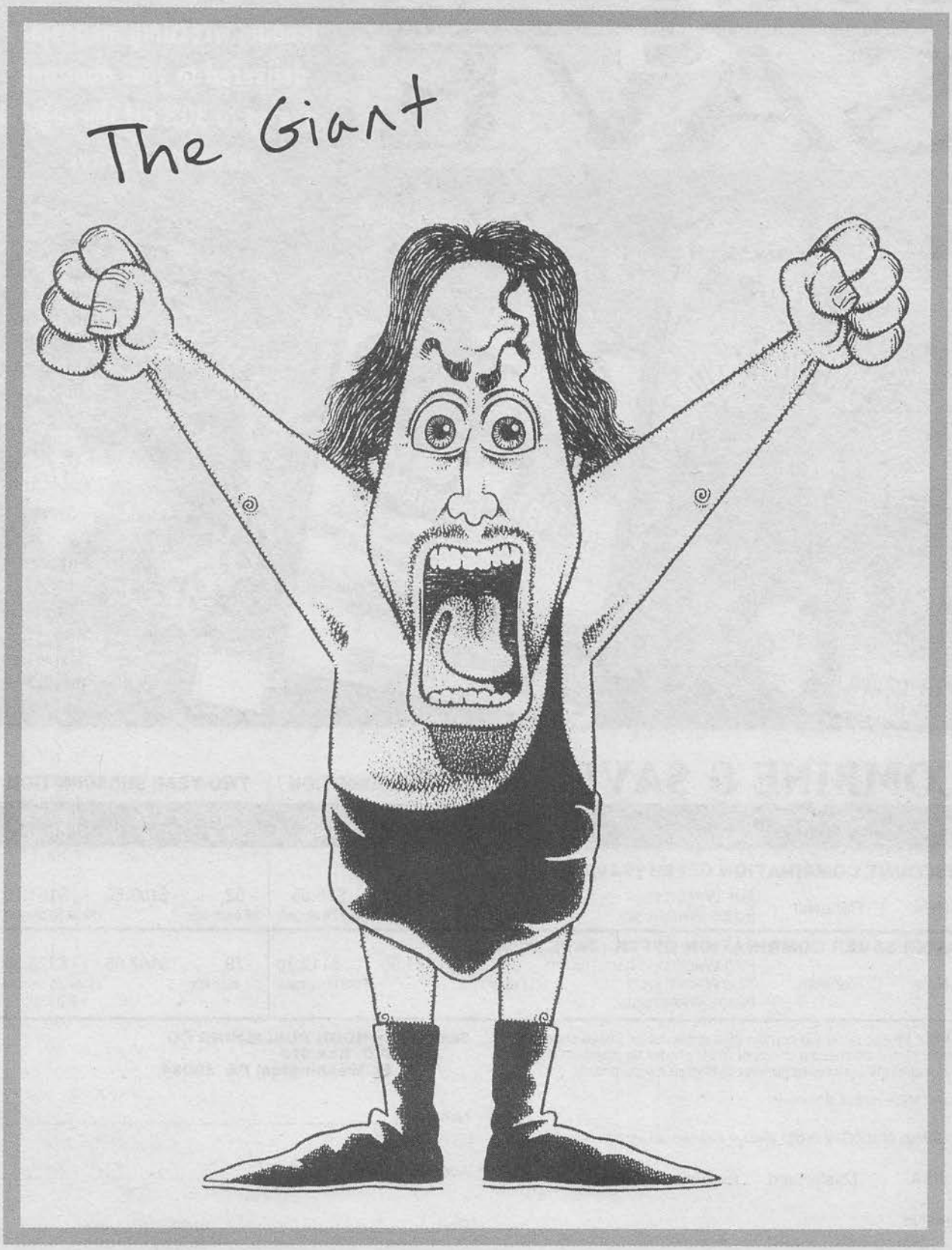
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Choke-slam. It's basically a sure route to victory for the big man, and it's failed only against Hulk Hogan. Unfortunately, opponents have learned their lesson and keep safe distance from The Giant.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

WCW broadcaster Bobby Heenan: "The Giant is a fearsome individual, but he doesn't wrestle enough singles matches anymore. I think the most important thing for him is to gain as much experience as possible, then go after the big belt again. He can beat Hogan."

WCW World champion Hulk Hogan: "I've always said, the bigger they are, the harder they fall, especially against 'Hollywood' Hogan. I've never had any trouble with big men because they can't come close to matching my power. If The Giant was smart, he'd steer clear of me."

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "The Giant's first WCW World title reign was anything but a fluke, even though he was the first rookie to ever win the belt. He's an outstanding youngster who is only going to get better, but he needs some seasoning. He has to expand his repertoire. He's not unbeatable."


The Giant

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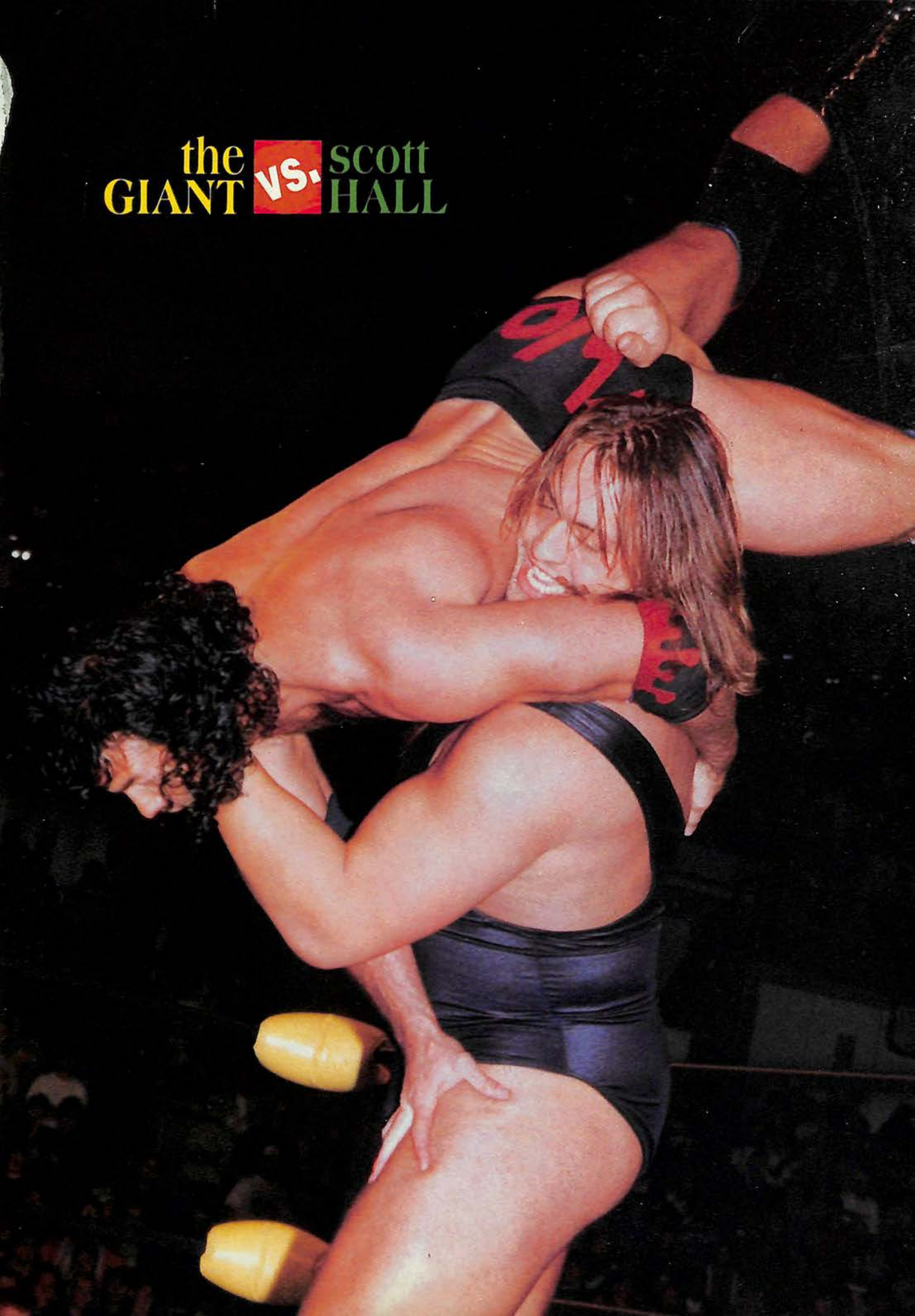
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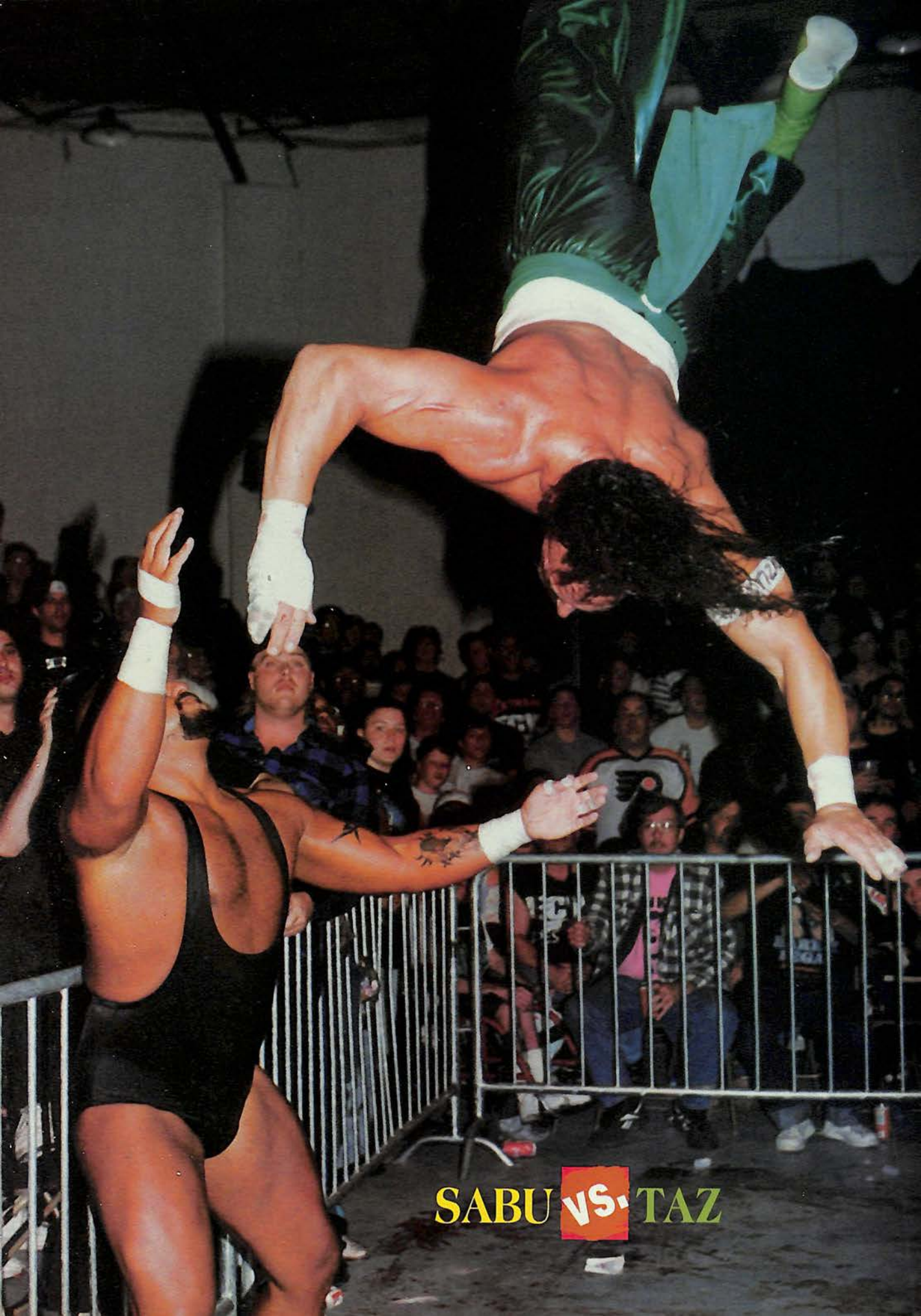
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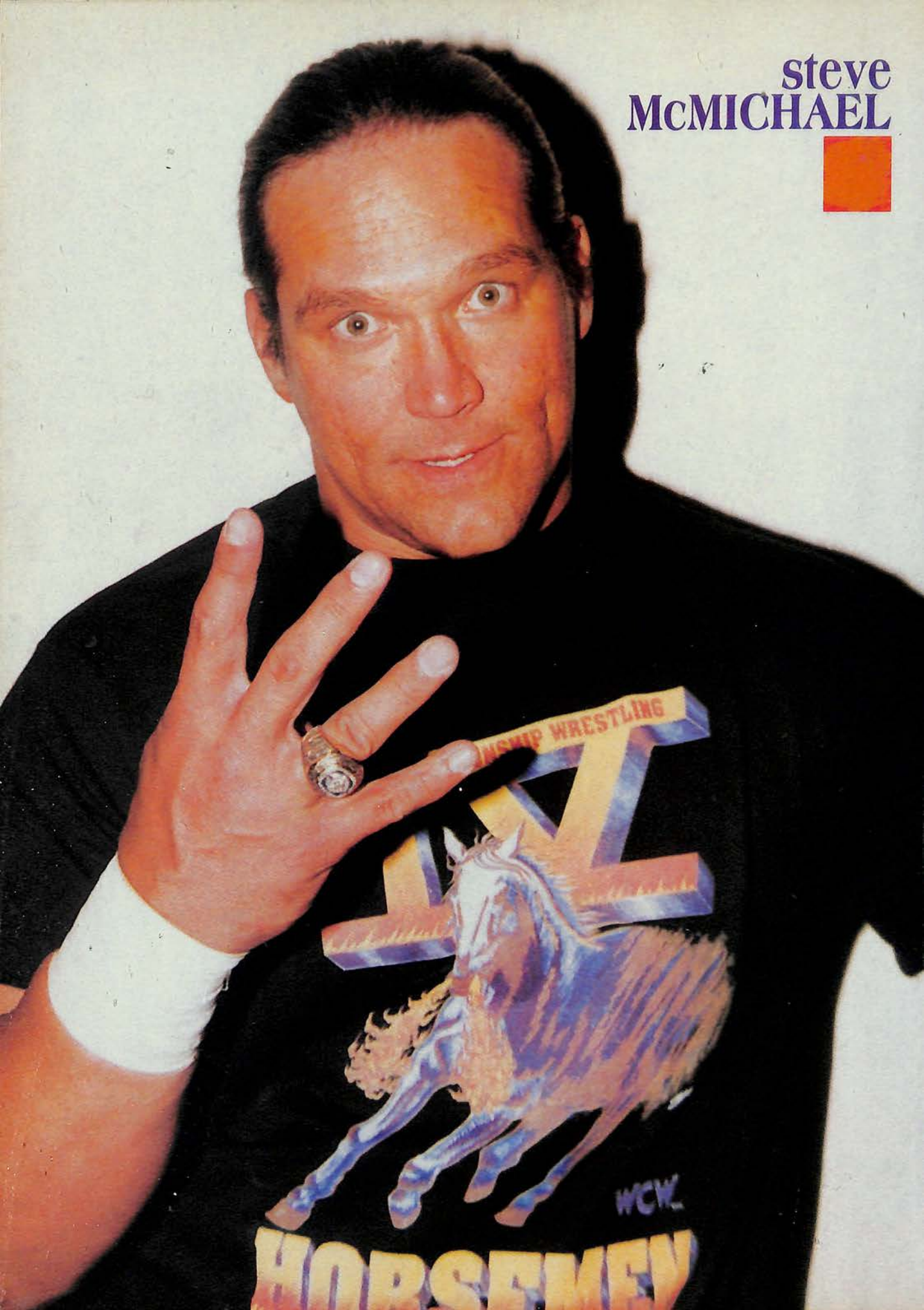
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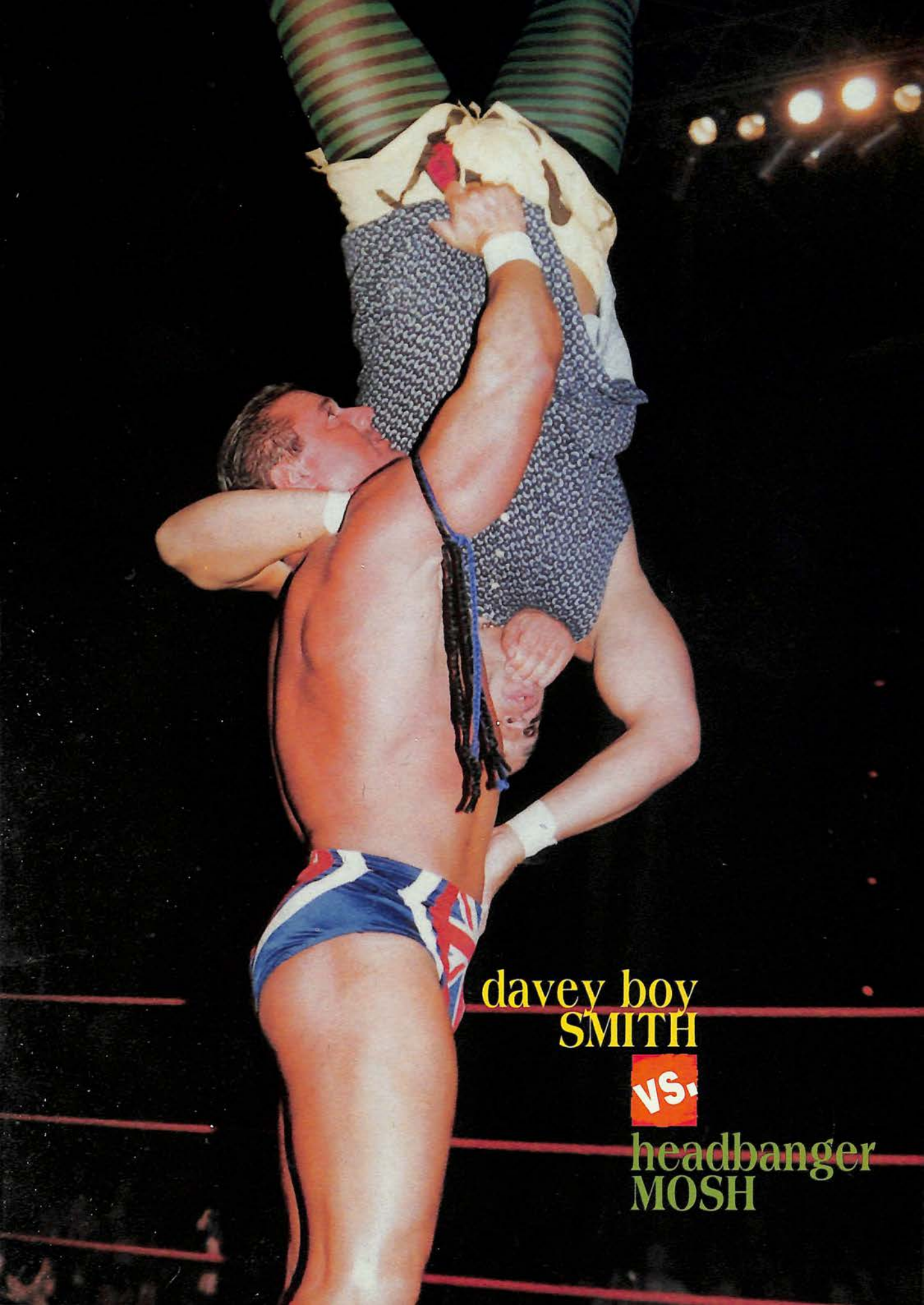

the GIANT
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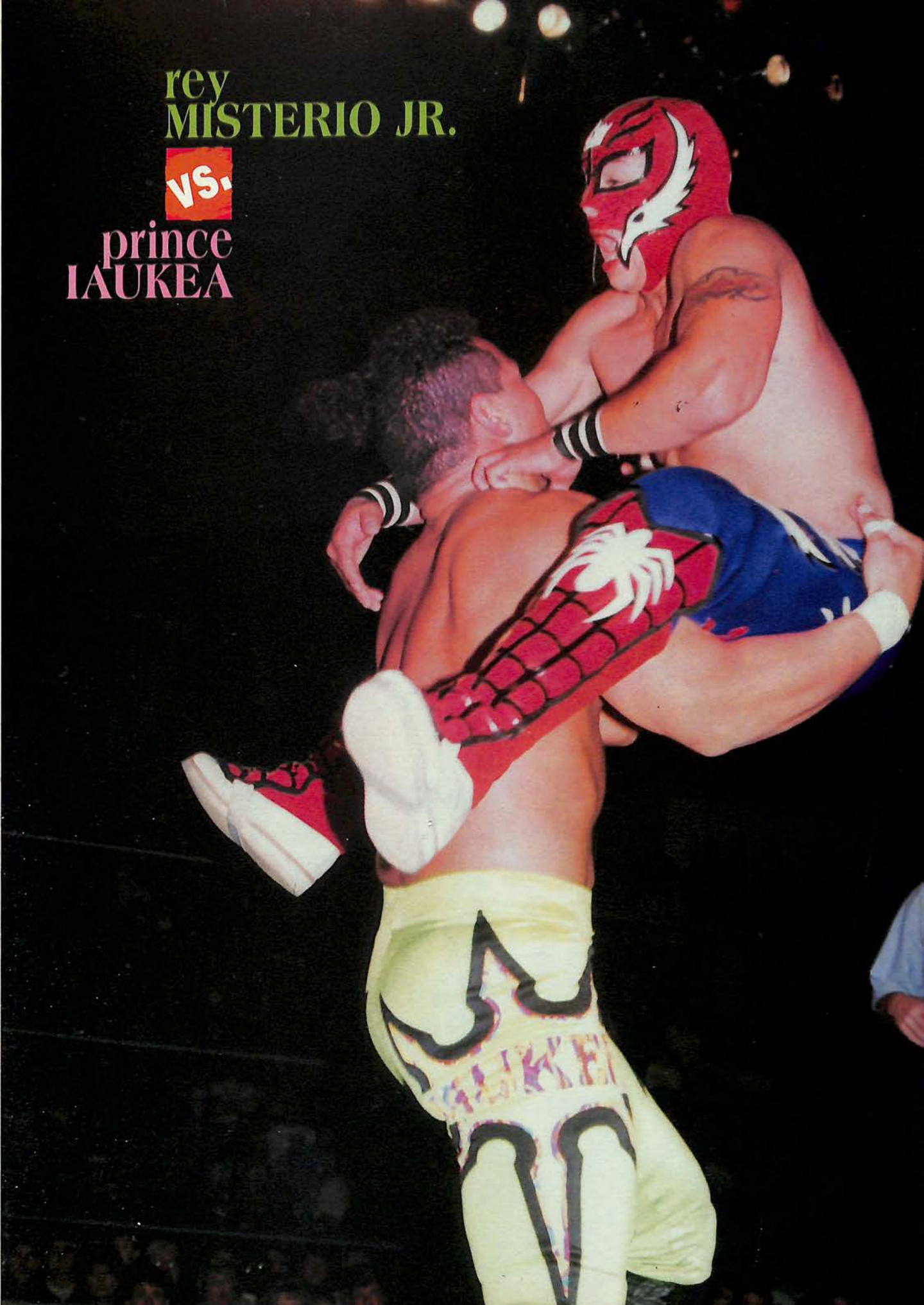

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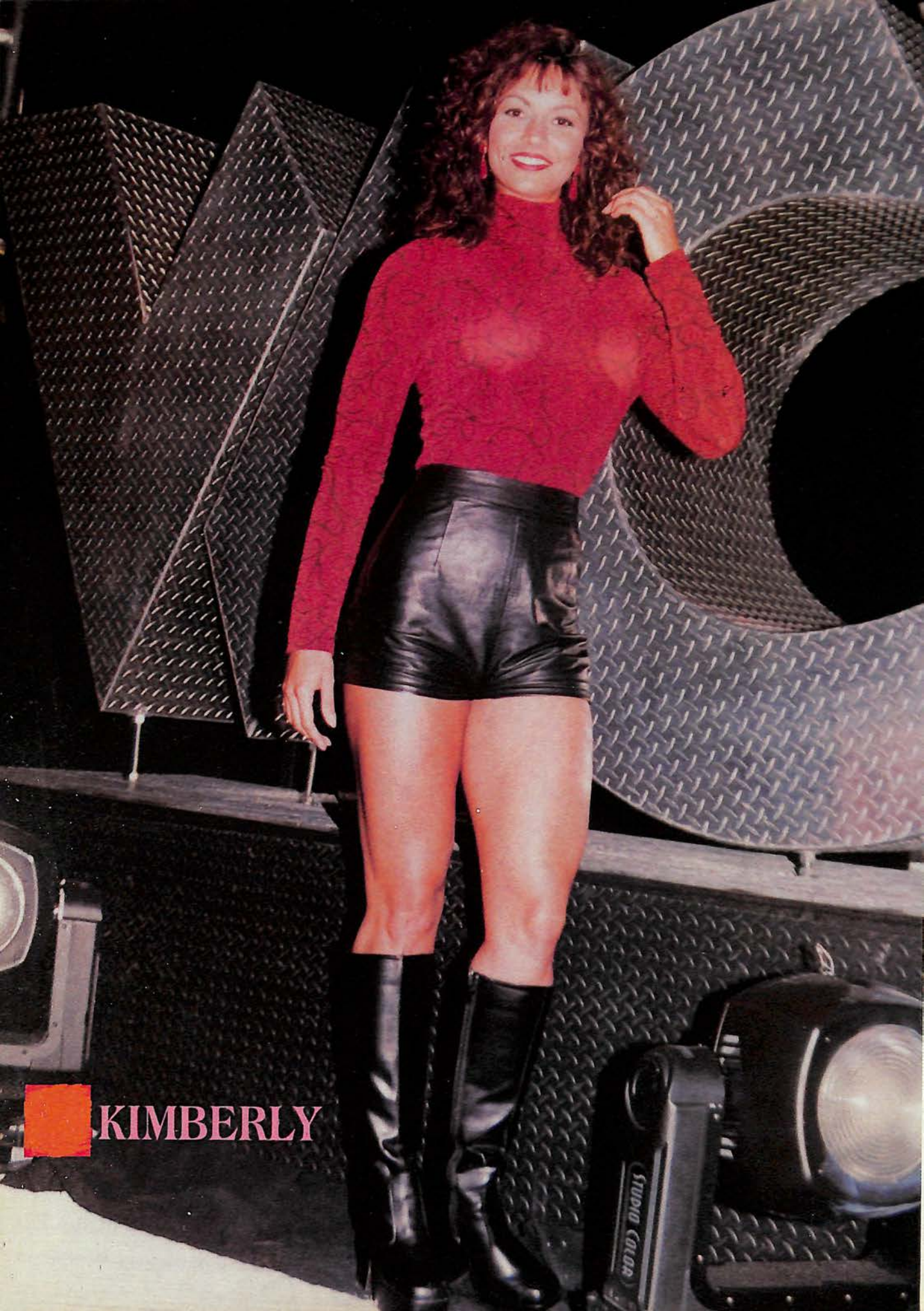
steve McMICHAEL

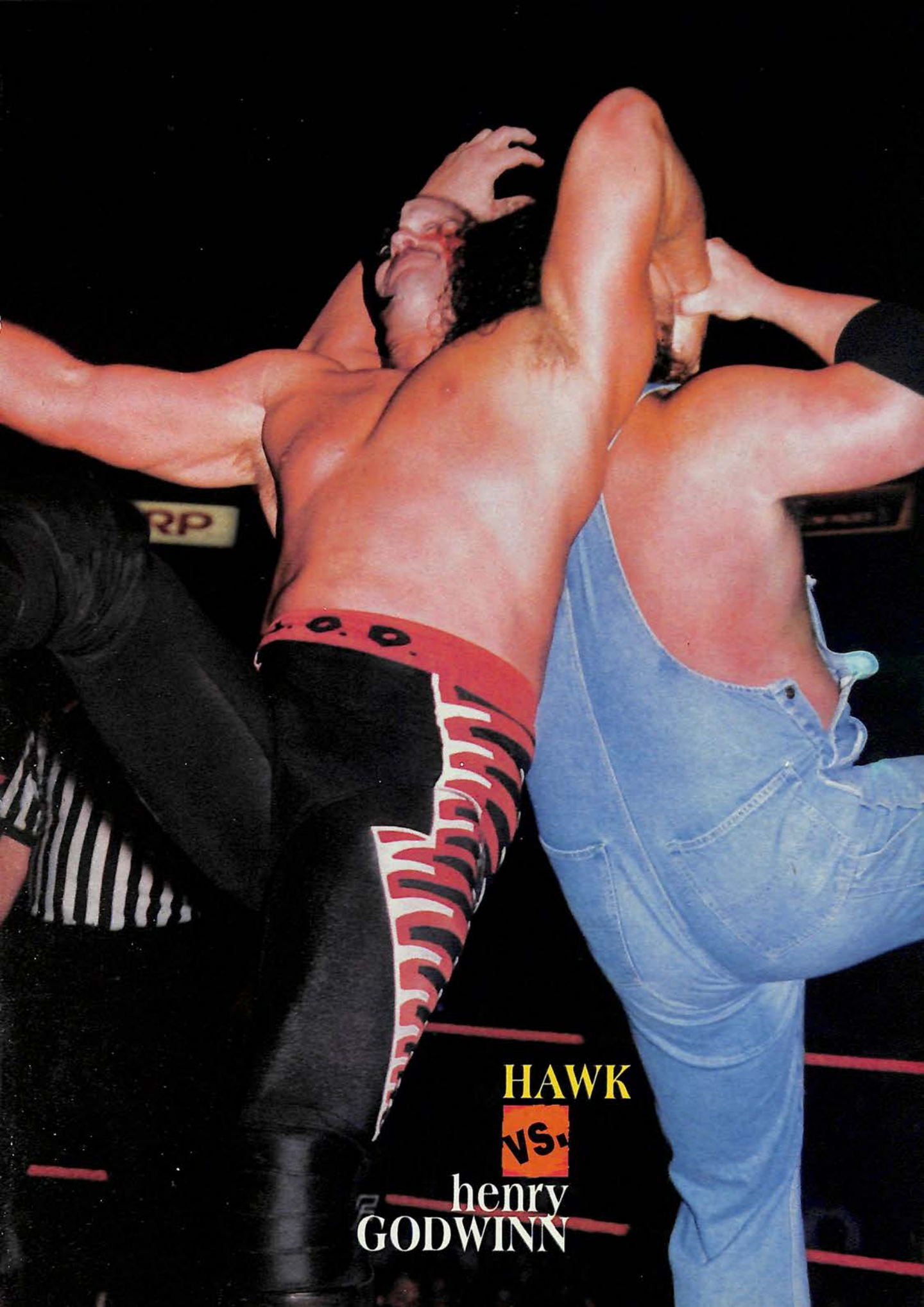


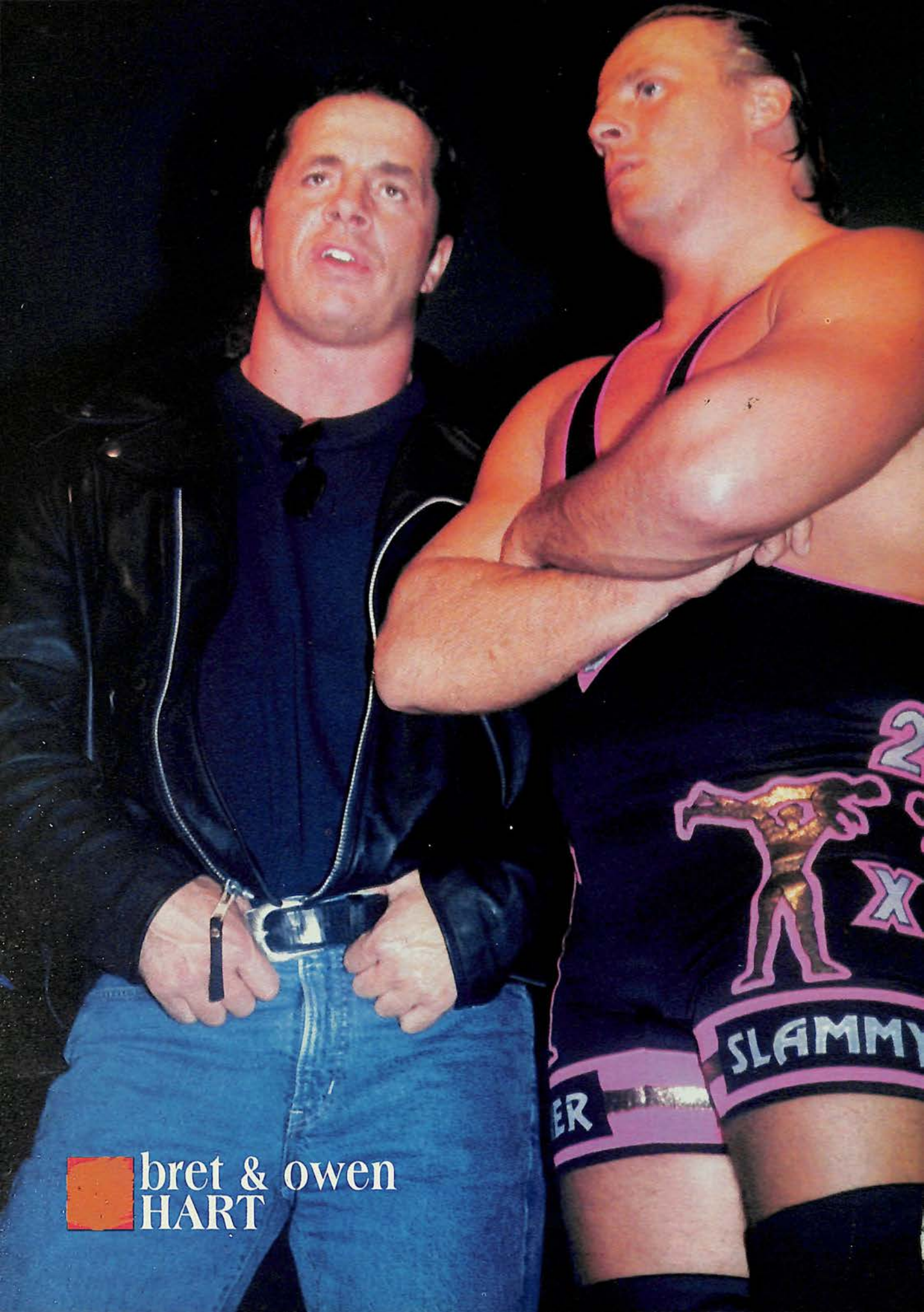

davey boy
SMITH
VS.
headbanger
MOSH


shawn
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KIMBERLY


HAWK
VS.
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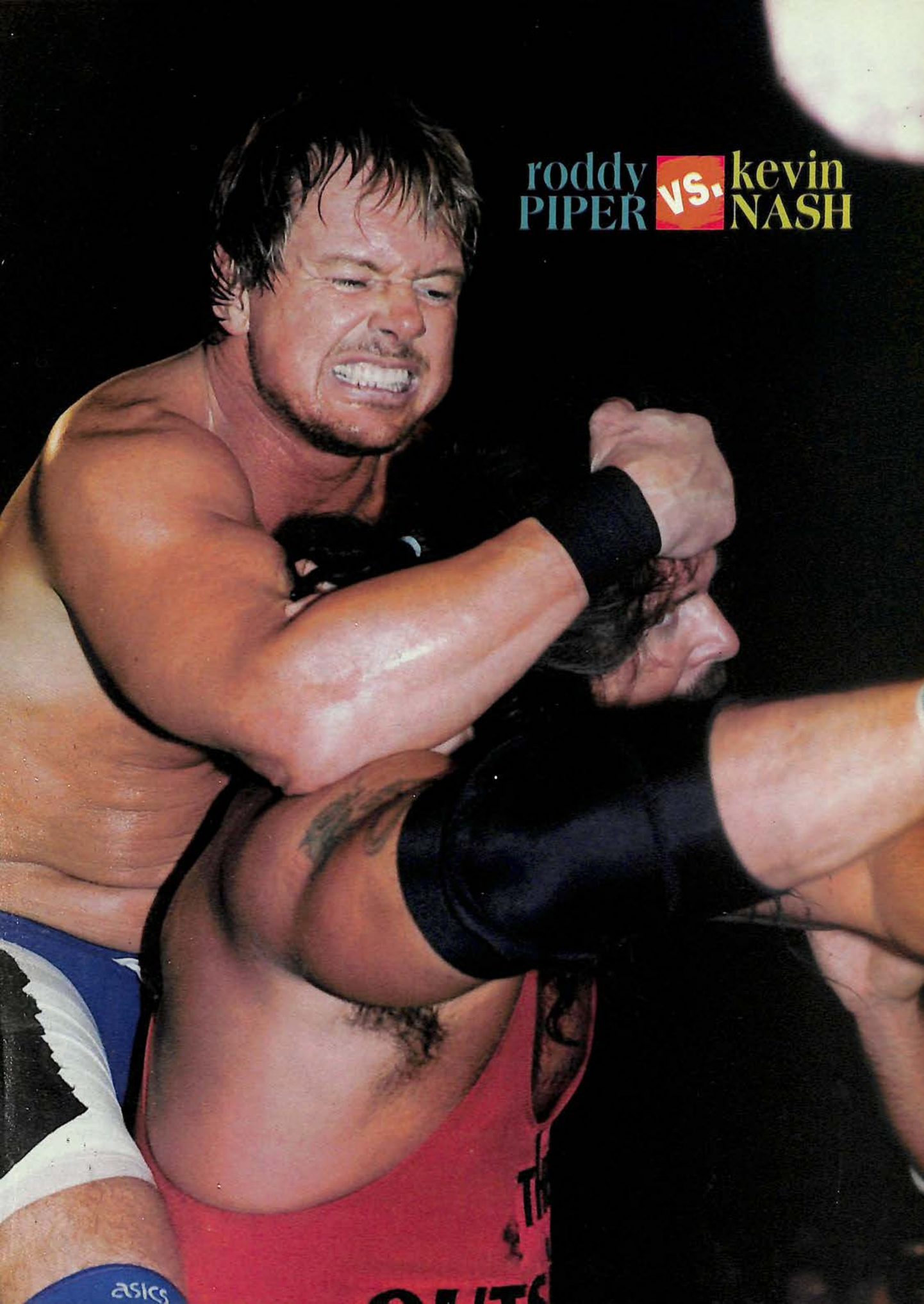
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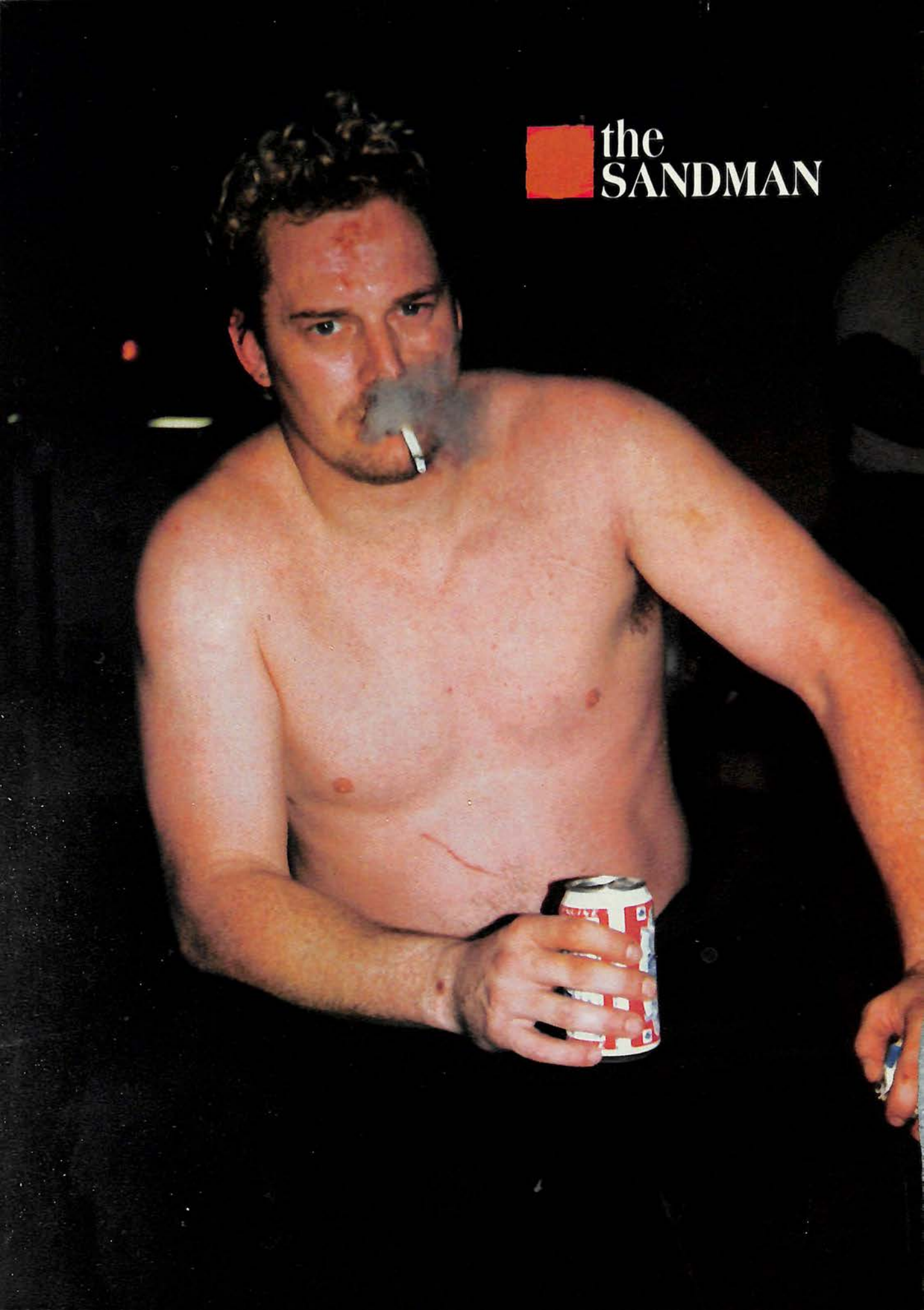

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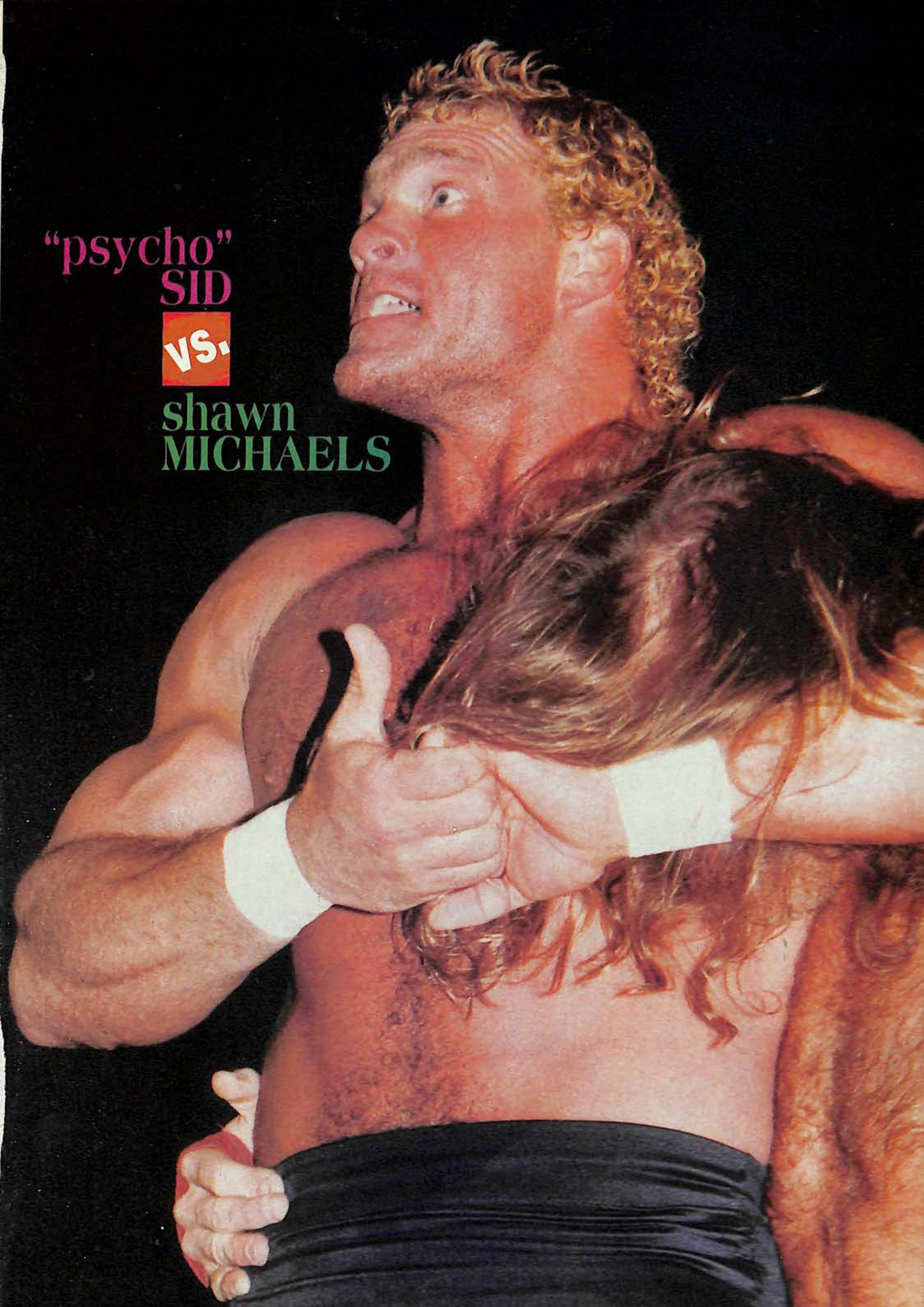

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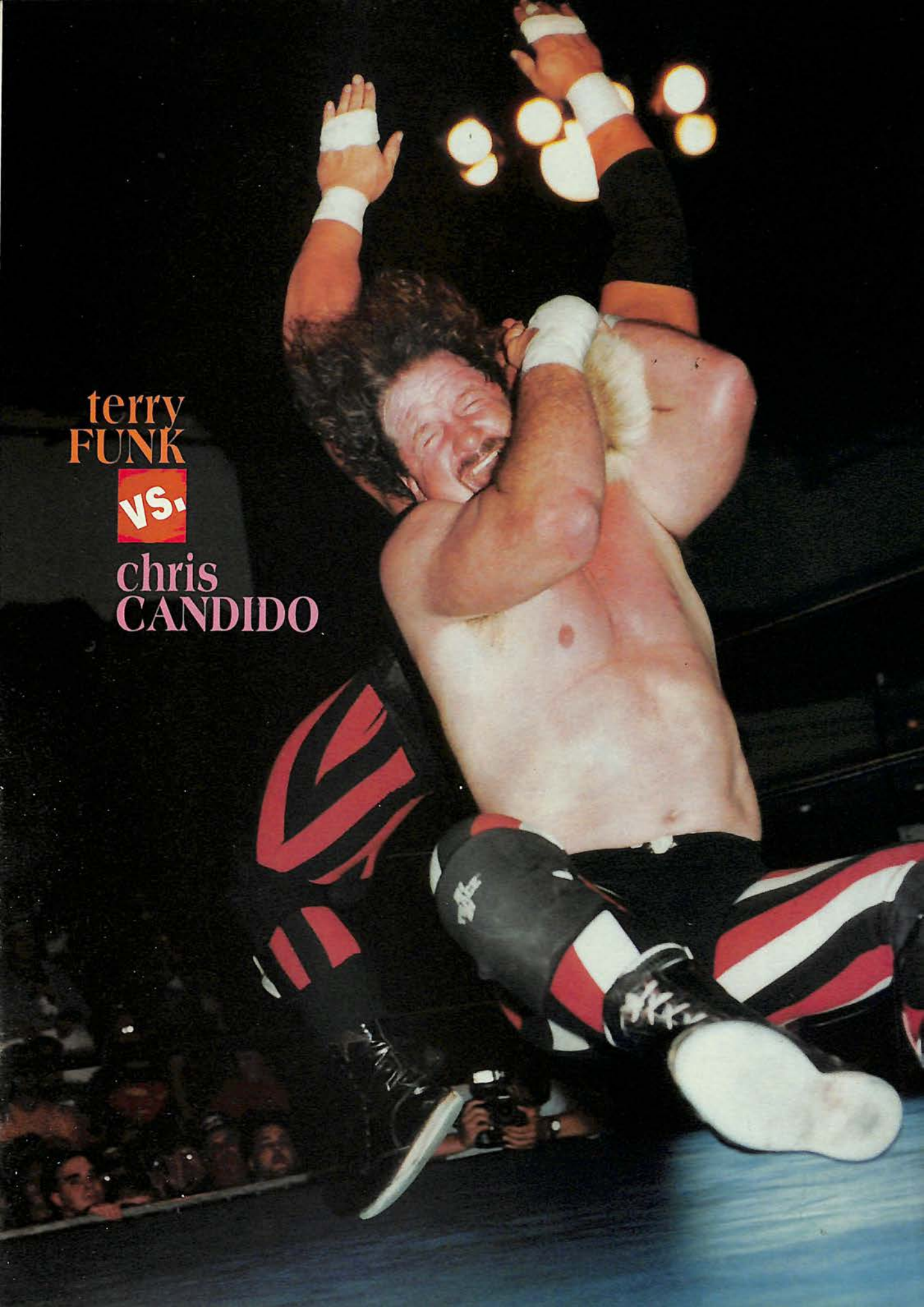

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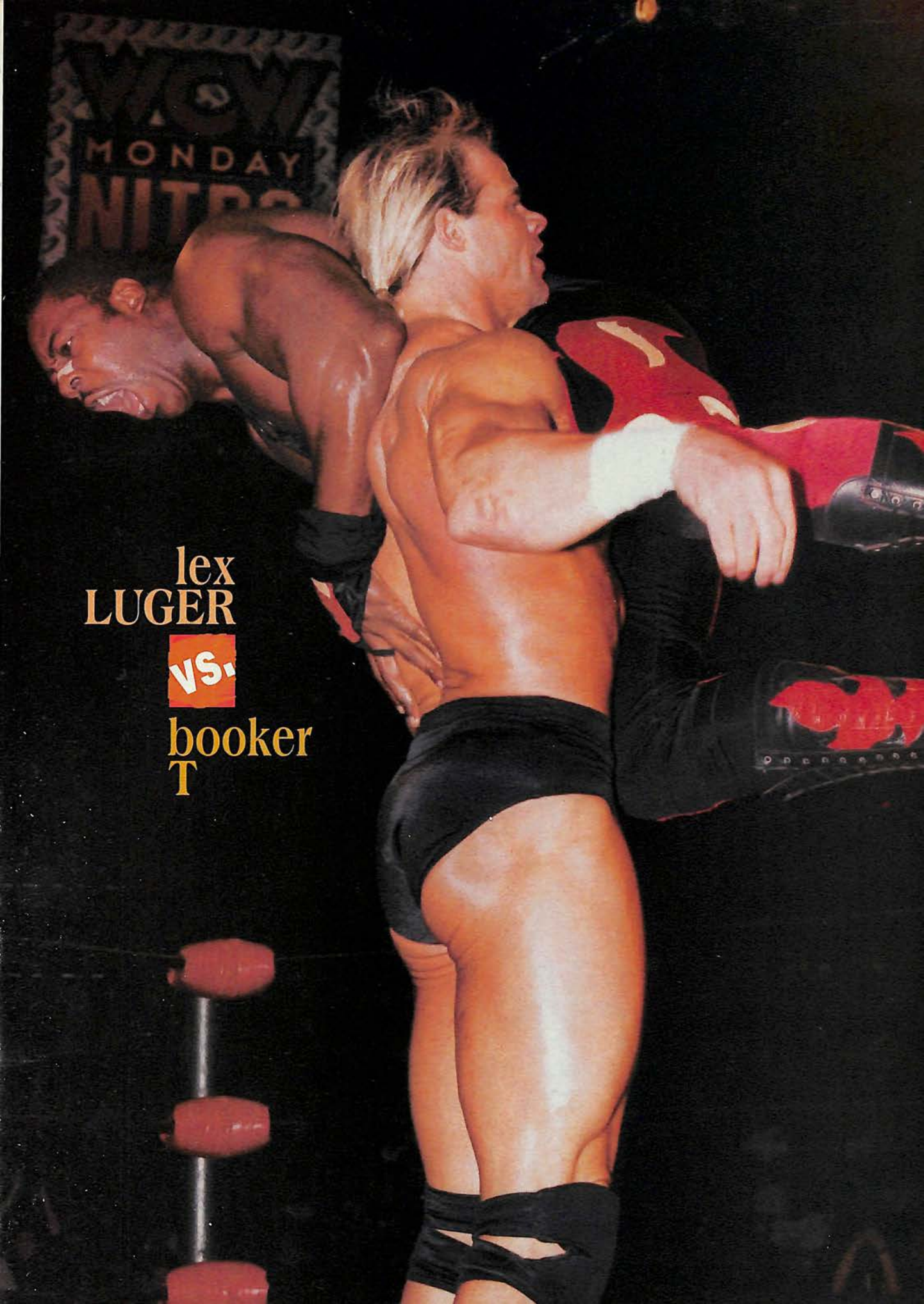

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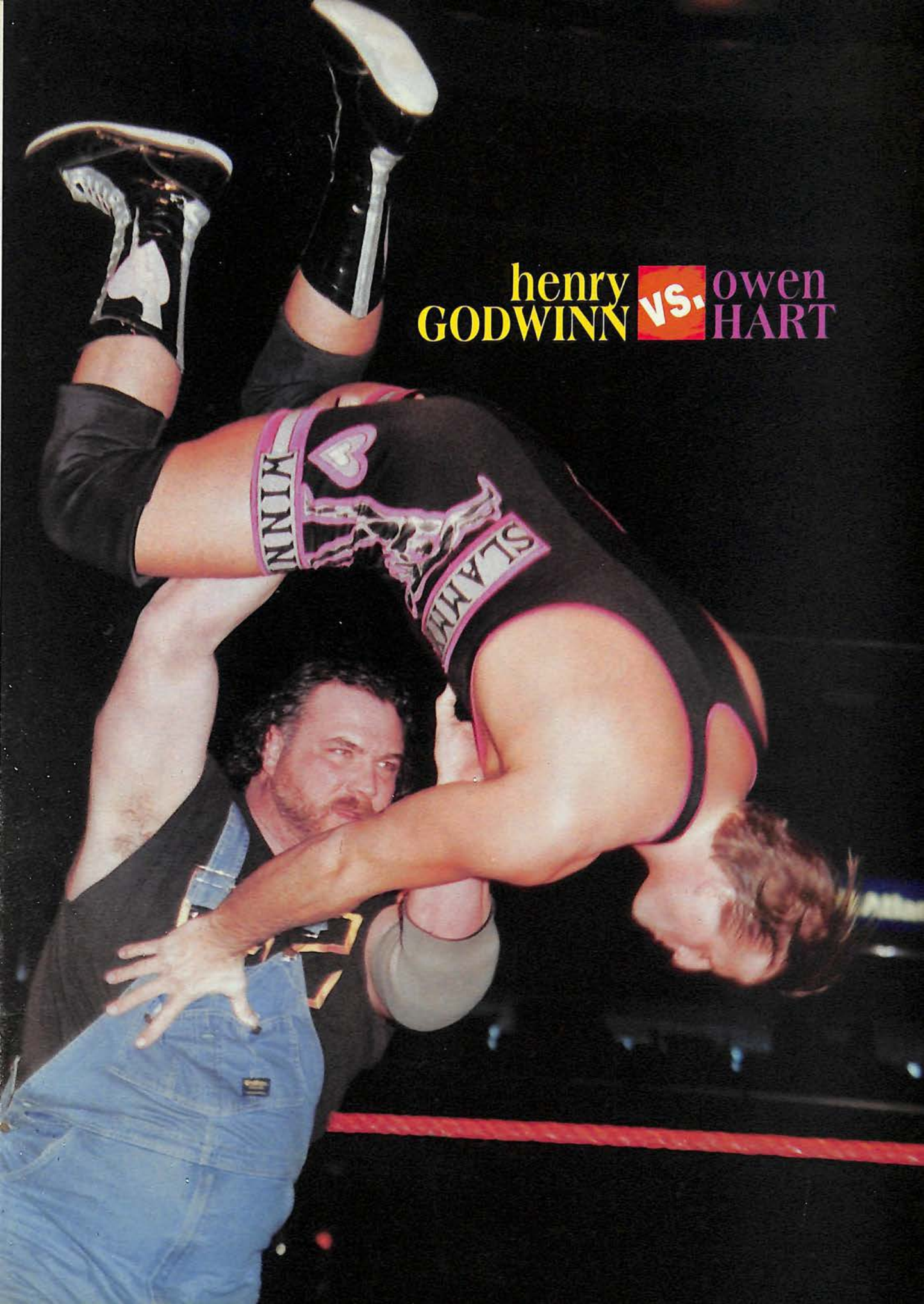

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&
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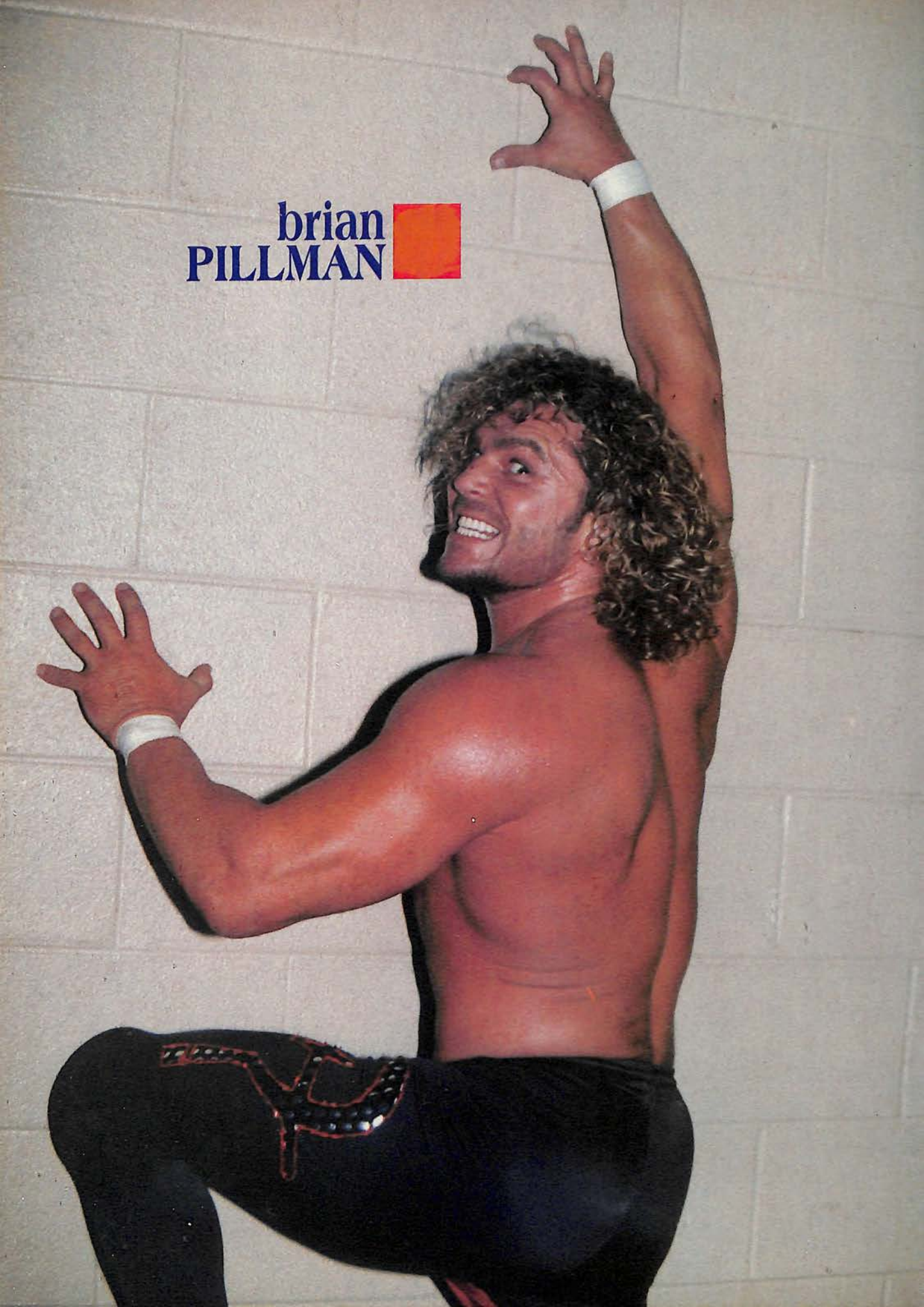

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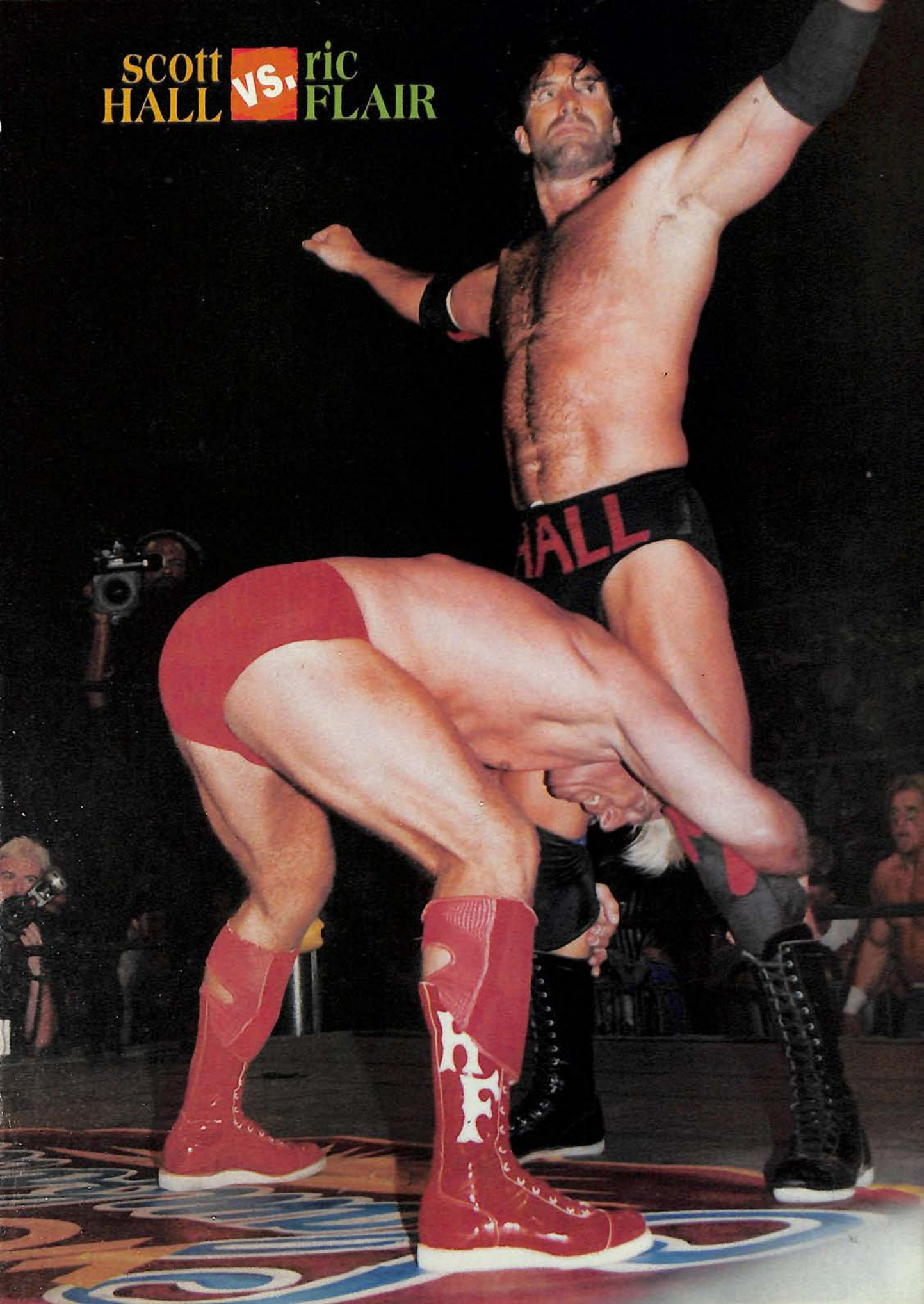

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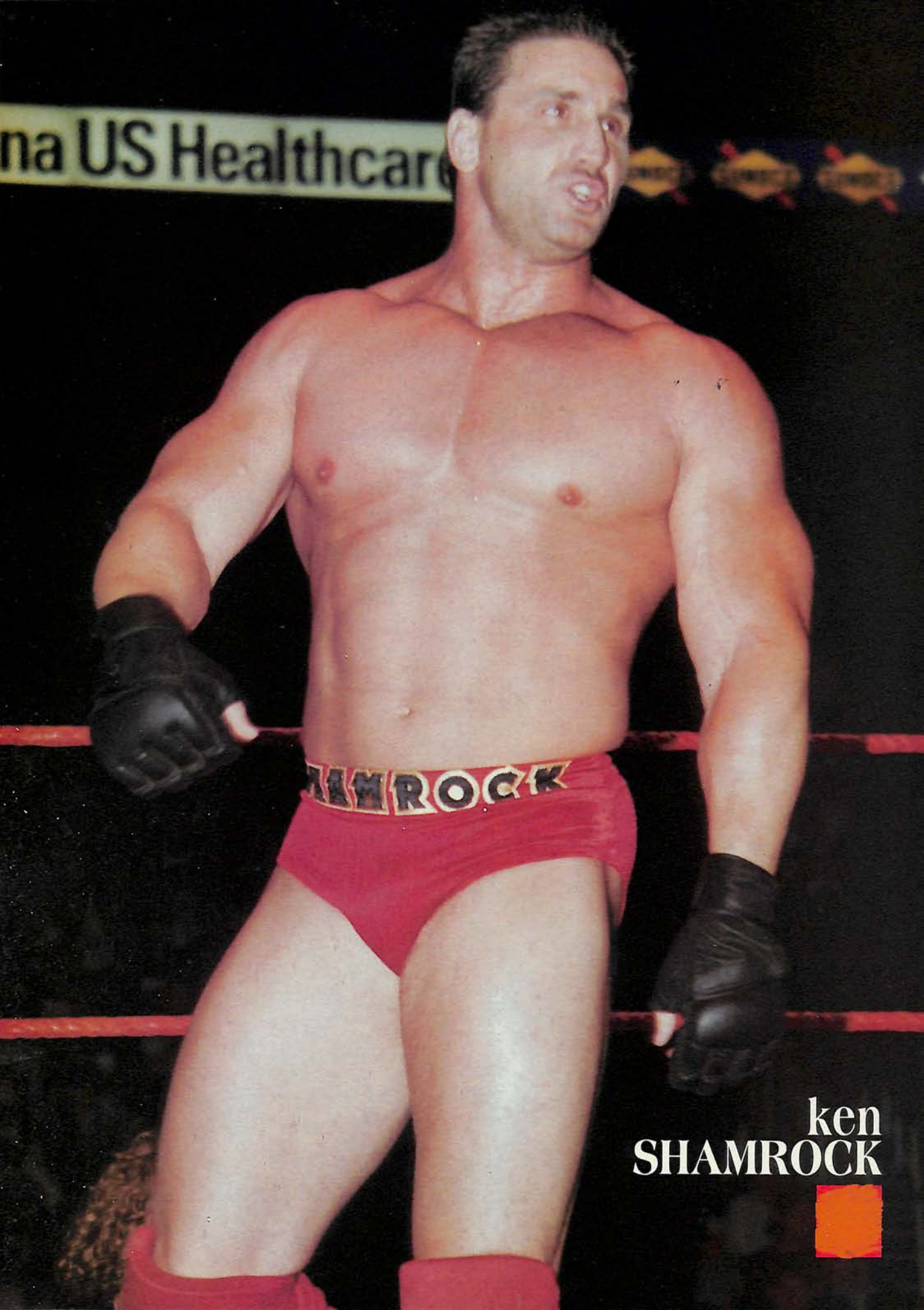

MONDAY
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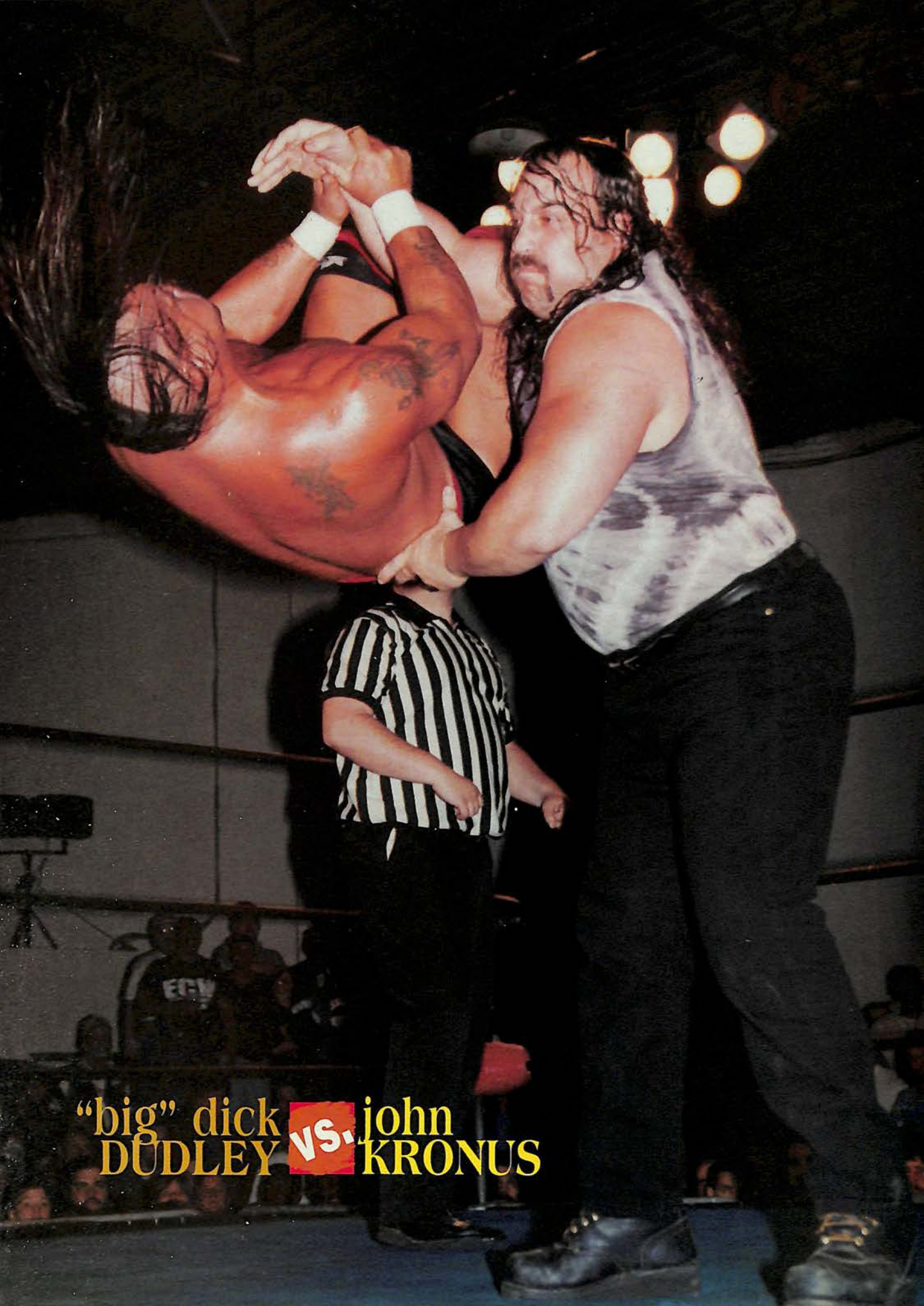

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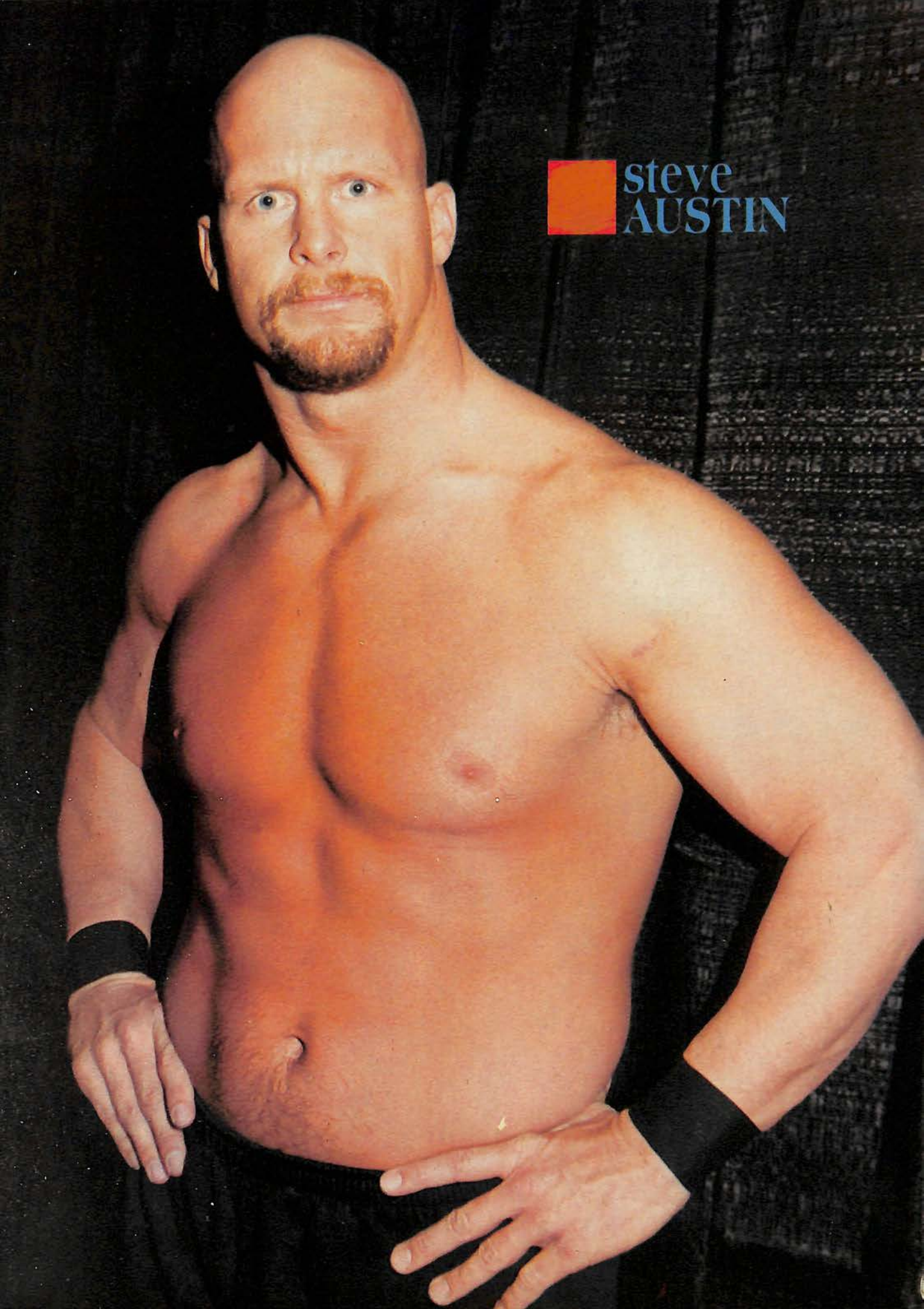

"big" dick DUDLEY
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the
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jeff
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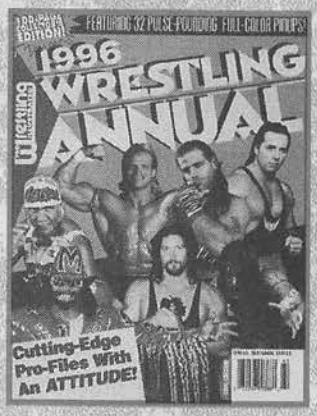

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VS.
MANKIND


steve
AUSTIN

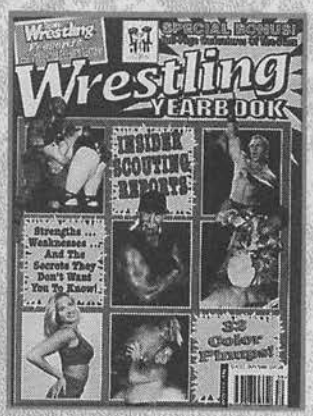
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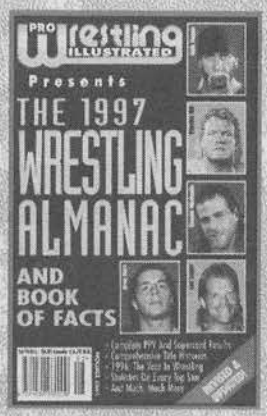
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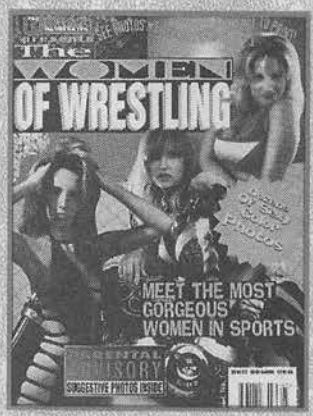
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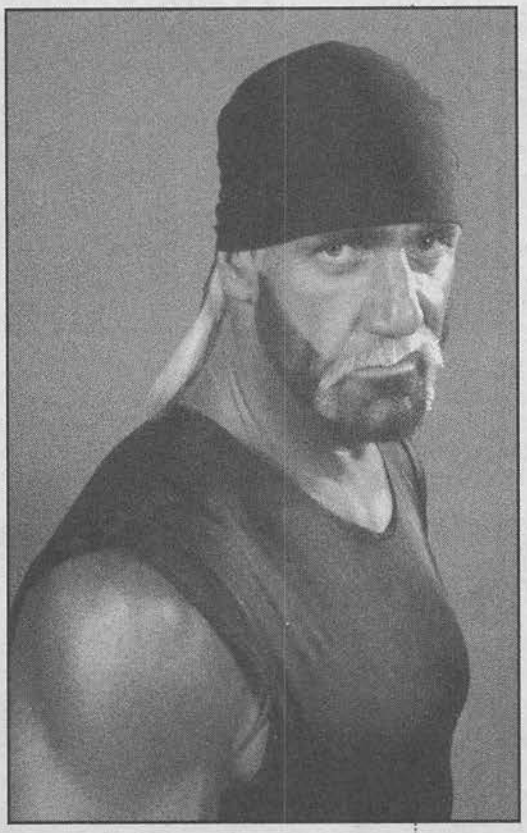
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SCOUTING REPORT:

HULK HOGAN



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 20-4-1; tag teams: 10-4-1; two Royal Rumble victories

CAREER OVERVIEW: Still the WCW World champion long after many people thought he was past his prime, "Hollywood" is the most prominent member of the New World Order. But he has cut back greatly on his wrestling schedule and deservedly drawn criticism from many quarters.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Hogan has always been a man who came on strong when it counted, but lately it's hard to tell because he wrestles so infrequently. When he does wrestle, Hogan usually relies on NWO interference to win. Now it's safe to say that the strongest part of his matches is when he gets help.

WEAKEST PART OF THE MATCHES: Historically weak early. Andre the Giant nearly pinned Hogan in the first minute of their WrestleMania III match. Has fared surprisingly well in marathon matches, but this year has struggled late and been worn down by better-conditioned foes.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Three men: Roddy Piper, Jacques Rougeau, and Lex Luger. All three defeated Hogan in recent non-title matches and hold a distinct psychological advantage over "Hollywood." As much as Hogan downplays the losses, he offered only one man—Piper—a followup title match.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: He still believes he can chop down the giants. He owns impressive career victories over The Giant, Big Van Vader, Andre the Giant, and King Kong Bundy. Matching power with power against Hogan remains a tough task and is still the best way to lose to him. In fact, some might say it's the only way to lose to him.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Although always susceptible to backbreakers and Boston crabs because of his chronically injured back, Hogan has fallen susceptible to sleeperholds; Piper beat him once and nearly beat him a second time with that hold in the last year alone.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: The threat of injury. As big and strong as Hogan is, he never seriously injures opponents. He merely beats them with his big boot-legdrop-pin combination. Imagine if Hogan had a choke-slam or a power bomb. Opponents would fear him.

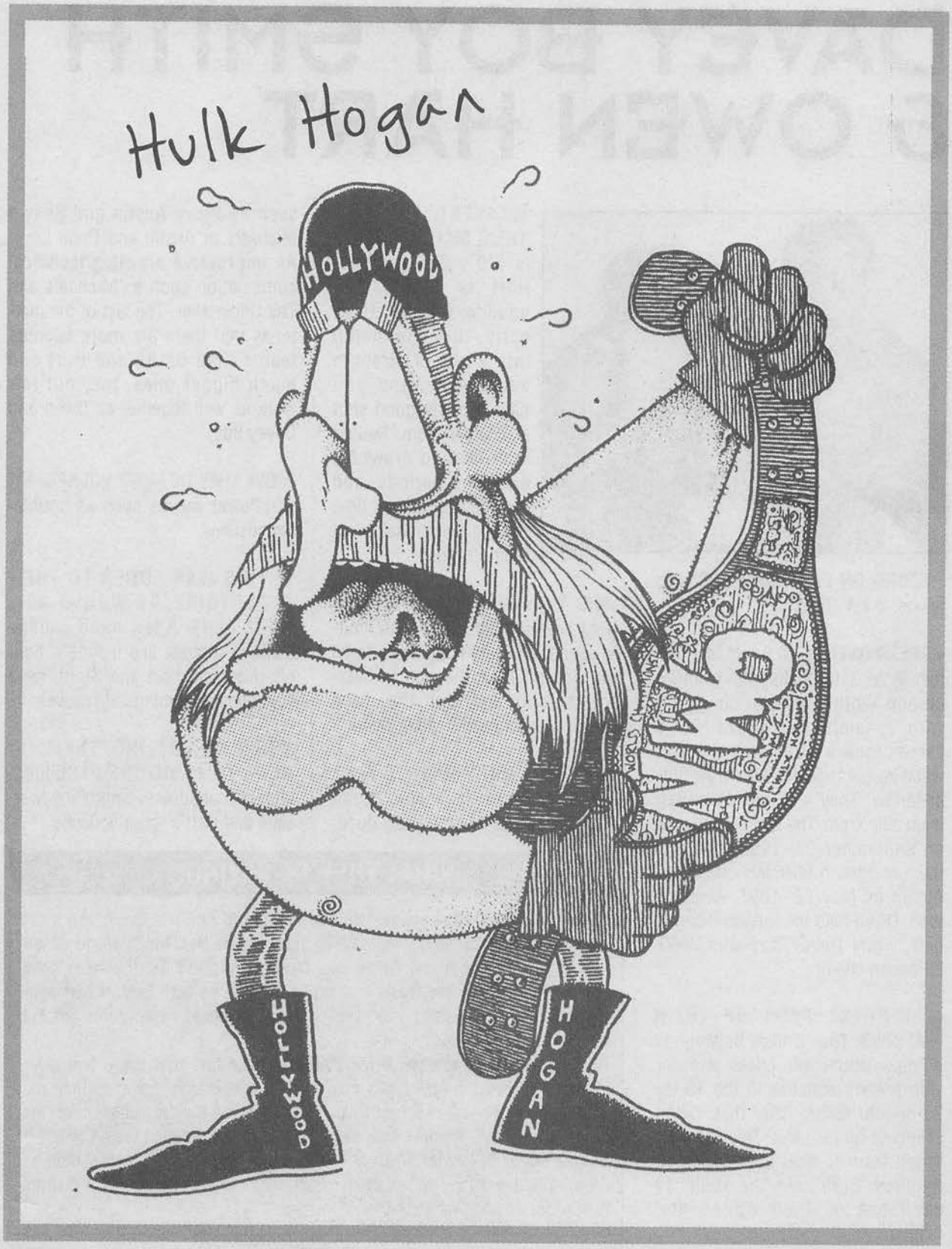
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Legdrop. When you see it coming, the match is over within about three seconds.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

WCW challenger Roddy Piper: "Hogan? Is he still wrestling? I thought he was off in Hollywood making bad movies. Let's face the facts about Hogan: Without the NWO, he's nothing. He wouldn't even have the belt. I'd have it."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Hogan is doing to the WCW World title what he used to do to the WWF World belt: not defend it. It's an absolute disgrace the way Hogan is allowed to get away with his inactivity. Where's the mighty J.J. Dillon when we need him?"

NWO leader Eric Bischoff: "If you want to be the best, you have to beat the best, and that still means beating 'Hollywood' Hogan. He is the best ever. End of discussion."


Hulk Hogan
HOLLYWOOD
HULK HOGAN
HOLLYWOOD
HOGAN

SCOUTING REPORT:

DAVEY BOY SMITH & OWEN HART



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Tag teams: 3-2-1

CAREER OVERVIEW: Smith is a former WWF Intercontinental champion and World tag team champion with Dynamite Kid. Owen Hart's career took a turn for the better when he got together with his brother-in-law. They won the World tag team title from The Smokin' Gunns on September 22, 1996, and lost them to Shawn Michaels and Steve Austin on May 26, 1997. At press time, Owen held the Intercontinental belt, while Davey Boy was WWF European champ.

STRONGEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: The "British Bulldog" is a fine scientific and power wrestler who prefers matches in the 13-to-20-minute range. After that, Owen seems to hit his peak. This is a very tough team to beat after 12 or 13 minutes. Both have the ability to capitalize on their opponents' fatigue.

WEAKEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: Smith is 5'9", 245 pounds; Hart is 5'10", 227 pounds. Go after them early, turn the match into a test of strength and power, and you have a pretty good shot at beating them. Neither man likes to brawl for extended periods, and they have a difficult time beating teams that are at their strongest.

WHO THEY WANT TO FACE: Mid-sized brawling tag teams with limited speed. If a team is going to brawl and doesn't have the size to overpower Smith and Hart, they have almost no chance of beating them.

WHO THEY DON'T WANT TO FACE: Big brawlers like The Road Warriors. More talented tag duos, such as Steve Austin and Shawn Michaels or Austin and Dude Love. An impressive brawling/technical combination such as Michaels and The Undertaker. The fact of the matter is that there are more talented teams than Smith and Hart and much bigger ones, too, but few work as well together as Owen and Davey Boy.

MOVE THEY'RE MOST VULNERABLE TO: Power moves such as double-clotheslines.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO THEIR REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A few more double-teaming moves, like maybe a double-dropkick. Hart and Smith need some power combination moves.

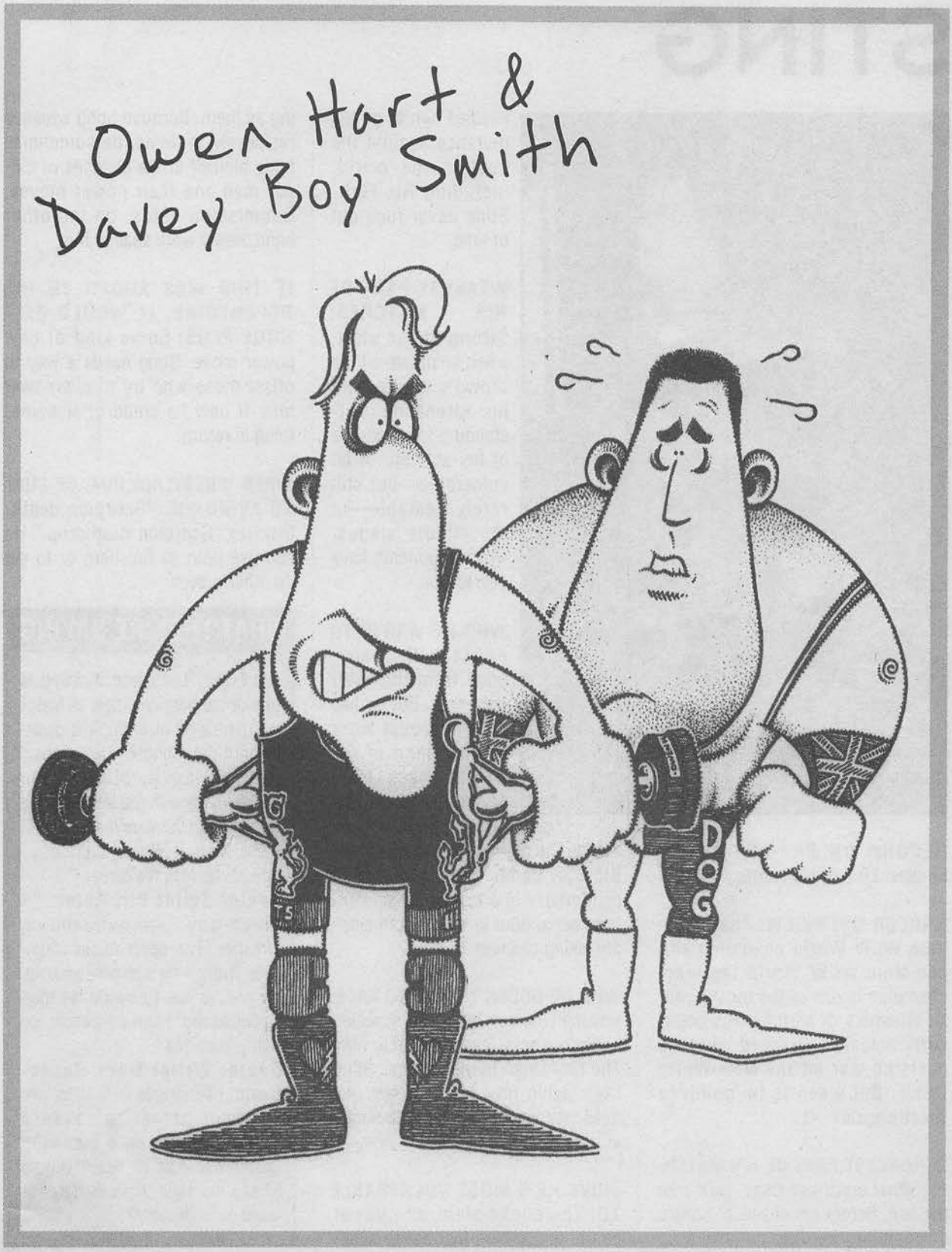
WHEN WRESTLING THEM, BE SURE TO AVOID THEIR: Sudden-impact maneuvers: Smith's powerslam and Hart's spinning kicks.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "No doubt about it, Smith is one of the most talented mid-sized wrestlers in WWF history, and Hart has a world of talent, too. Big problem: If Owen and Davey Boy don't get the belts back soon, I think you'll see Owen looking to team more with Bret. If that happens, Davey Boy won't be too happy, and that could mean doom for the whole Hart Foundation."

Hart Foundation member Brian Pillman: "The fact that these two guys almost got into a huge feud a few months ago is only going to help us. They know how nasty each other can be and know they're better off on the same side. They'll go down someday as one of the greatest teams ever."

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "I can't help but thinking that this team would be more effective if they were fan favorites. It fits tneir style better. A change is in order as soon as possible."


Owen Hart &
Davey Boy Smith
DOG

SCOUTING REPORT:

STING



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 20-9-1; tag teams: 13-5-2

CAREER OVERVIEW: The three-time WCW World champion and one-time WCW World tag team champion is one of the most popular wrestlers of all-time. His popularity actually increased when he declared war on the New World Order. But when is he going to wrestle again?

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: What matches? Okay, we'll take the bait. Before his absence, Sting's outstanding aerobic conditioning enabled him to go the distance against the best in the world, including Ric Flair. Sting never runs out of time.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Strong at the start, when he draws off the crowd's energy and his adrenaline. Outstanding late because of his stamina. A bit vulnerable—but still rarely beatable—in the middle stages, when opponents have geared up.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Well ... anybody from the NWO right now. But he has done his best work against men in his weight class (260 pounds) and around his height (6'2"). Of course, he also owns victories over Big Van Vader. Still, he is most comfortable in a fast-paced scientific or aerial bout in which both sides are taking chances.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Anyone who can hurt him, especially big bruisers. Vader did beat him. The Giant has humbled him. Sting likes facing men his own size and does well against men a little smaller than he is, too.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The choke-slam, the power bomb, and others just as devastating as them. Because Sting wrestles recklessly at times, he sometimes finds himself in the clutches of bigger men and their power moves. Submission holds, on the other hand, rarely work against him.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Some kind of new power move. Sting needs a way to offset those who try to overpower him. If only he could offer something in return.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Scorpion deathlock" or "Scorpion deathdrop." He can use both as finishers or to set up other moves.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Ric Flair: "Let's face it, Sting is one of the best wrestlers in history. There's no disputing the greatness of the 'Stinger.' He's walked the aisle dozens of times and walked back with the belt. But I've always said he would have been better if he developed more of an attitude early in his career."

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "A great guy. An outstanding wrestler. The sport misses him, even though he's always around. He always has to watch his step because he's the target of so many enemies."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Where is he? Why are we even bothering to do a scouting report on a man who hasn't wrestled all year? Who's to say his skills haven't deteriorated considerably?"

Sting



SCOUTING REPORT:

GOLDUST



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 12-11-3; tag teams: 2-4

CAREER OVERVIEW: Check out that pay-per-view record and you'll find out all you need to know about the former Dustin Rhodes. He has faltered in too many of his big matches, although he is a former WCW U.S. and WWF Intercontinental champion. Needs to learn how to win more of the big ones.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Does his best work between the four- and nine-minute marks of matches, when he's able to wrestle all-out and nonstop. Dustin is more proud of his ability to go the distance than he deserves to be.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: More than ever before, Goldust has proven over the past year that he can't go the distance against the best technical wrestlers. Suddenly has become a wrestler who can't do much after about 12 minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Like his father, the great Dusty Rhodes, Goldust does his best work when his manhood is challenged by brawlers. He really can brawl with the best of them; we think he'd have a good shot now against The Undertaker, who has beaten him in the past. Dusty obviously passed on his genes.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Scientific wrestlers with plenty of stamina. Over the past year, Goldust has lost to Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels, Steve Austin, Hunter Hearst Helmsley, and Owen Hart. What more evidence do we need that he can't deal with mat experts and aerial wrestlers who shoot in quick bursts? By the way, Goldust's "coming out" as Dustin Rhodes might have destroyed any psychological advantage he held over those who were taken aback by his weirdness.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Attacks that take him off his feet. Goldust is ineffective when he can't use the leverage his height provides.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Some aerial maneuvers. The better wrestlers know what to expect from Goldust; it's up to him to add a new wrinkle or two to keep his opponents guessing.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Hands. Goldust can jab with the left and knock you out with a right. It's a powerful wallop and all of the power comes from his shoulders. Avoid Marlena, too. She has a say in most of his matches, especially his wins.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Rival Owen Hart: "I think we've seen what Goldust is all about. He's about all style and no substance. When he's ready to learn a few moves, I'll be ready to wrestle him again."

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "I respect Goldust's decision to come out and talk about his father and reveal his identity, but I'm not sure what good became of it. Goldust was good as Goldust. He has really struggled as Goldust/Dustin Rhodes."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Sometimes, such as in the case of Ken Griffey Jr., the offspring is an improvement over the father. In this case, Goldust has really struggled to live up to his father's legacy. Too bad. I think he should be content to be the best he can possibly be."


Goldust
&
Marlena

SCOUTING REPORT:

RANDY SAVAGE



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 13-11; tag teams: 12-2-2

CAREER OVERVIEW: The former WWF World champion launched an unlikely comeback in WCW and surprised everyone by winning the World title twice. But, as his recent losses to "Diamond" Dallas Page indicate, Savage is past his prime. And he's crazier than ever before.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: When the NWO interferes. Savage defeated Page at The Great American Bash because Scott Hall interfered and used an "Outsiders' Edge" on DDP. But how might that match have turned out if Hall hadn't gotten involved? Savage has looked sluggish in many of his matches this year.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first five minutes. Savage has fared best in the middle.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Reckless aerial artists and past-their-prime scientific wrestlers who aren't capable of taking advantage of his impatient nature. Recently, Savage has done his best work in tag teams.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Patient mat wrestlers such as Page who know the game and are a lot of what Savage is: fierce, determined, willing to learn from mistakes. He has trouble with counterwrestlers and usually won't change his game plan in the middle of a match.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: "Diamond" Dallas Page's "Diamond cutter" is not merely a pain in the neck for Savage, it also puts pressure on his oft-injured lower back. Figure-four leglocks and other muscle-stretching moves also hurt the "Macho Man."

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A finishing move that can be executed quickly (like the "Diamond cutter").

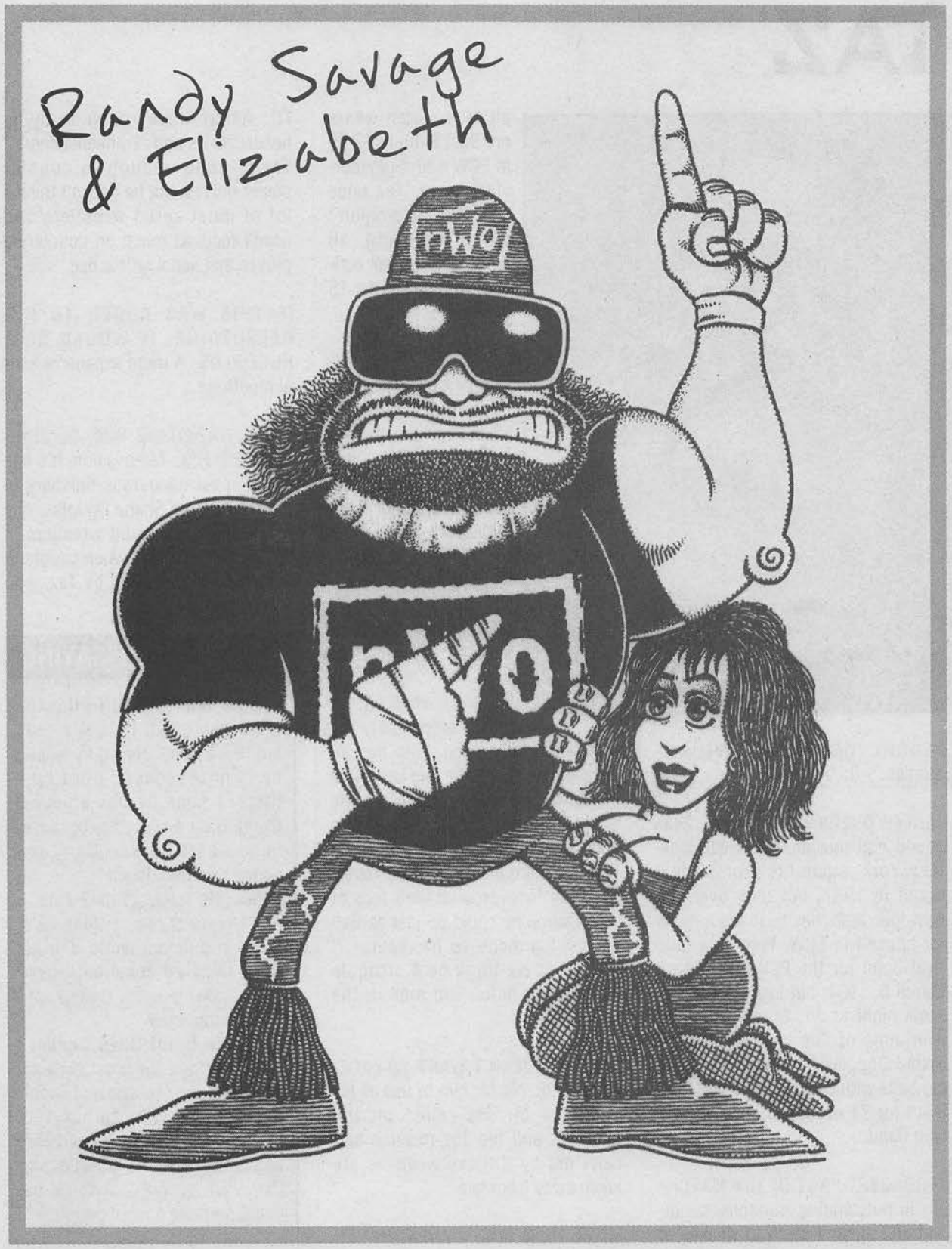
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Flying axhandle. Still effective. You could count on one hand the number of wrestlers who have recovered from it and gone on to win.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Arch-rival "Diamond" Dallas Page: "You know something, I used to respect Savage. I used to watch him on TV and think, *There's a great wrestler.* But that was the old Savage. The one we're seeing now is just a thug and a coward."

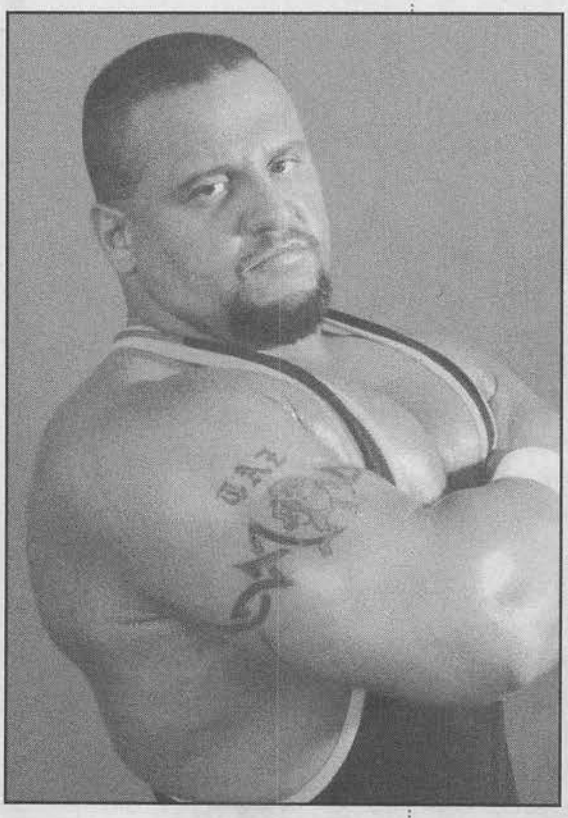
Publisher Stu Saks: "Savage has gone completely off the deep end, and I fear that Elizabeth has gone off with him. He's totally distracted by his feud with Page and Kimberly."

WCW World champion Hulk Hogan: "Don't underestimate the 'Macho Man.' I still say that after me, he's the man most deserving of holding the NWO World belt. He's been on top before, and he knows what it takes to get there."


Randy Savage
& Elizabeth
nWo
nWo

SCOUTING REPORT:

TAZ



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 1-0

CAREER OVERVIEW: The 5'9", 248-pound mat master from Red Hook, New York, made his professional debut in 1987, but only over the past four years has he made a name for himself in ECW. Beat long-time rival Sabu for the ECW TV title on March 6, 1994, but lost the belt the same night to J.T. Smith. Regained it in June of this year by beating Shane Douglas. Also won the ECW tag belts with Sabu in 1995 and held them for 21 days; has since feuded with Sabu.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: In outstanding anaerobic condition and doesn't seem to weaken at all as a match wears on. Beat Sabu in 17:49 at ECW's first pay-per-view event. Taz once said that he wouldn't mind wrestling all night, and he was serious. Strongest after 15 minutes.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first five minutes, when brawlers and big men are at their strongest and Taz hasn't weakened them sufficiently to use one of his many suplexes. Not big, but makes up for lack of size with tremendous all-around skill.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Men nearly his size, especially Sabu, who has an outstanding repertoire and keeps Taz interested. Taz enjoys a challenge. He also enjoys beating up on wrestlers such as Mikey Whipwreck and Spike Dudley, who don't have enough overall talent to overcome their lack of size. Claims he could do just as well against big men—he has beaten 7' 911—but we think he'd struggle against the better big men in the sport.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Anyone too big for him to use all his suplexes on. He relies on the suplexes and the Taz-mission and can't get by if those weapons are taken away from him.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Aerial moves such as flying headscissors and "Frankensteiners." Taz is good enough to counter power moves, but he doesn't think a lot of most aerial wrestlers and hasn't focused much on countering moves that aerial artists use.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A more expansive aerial repertoire.

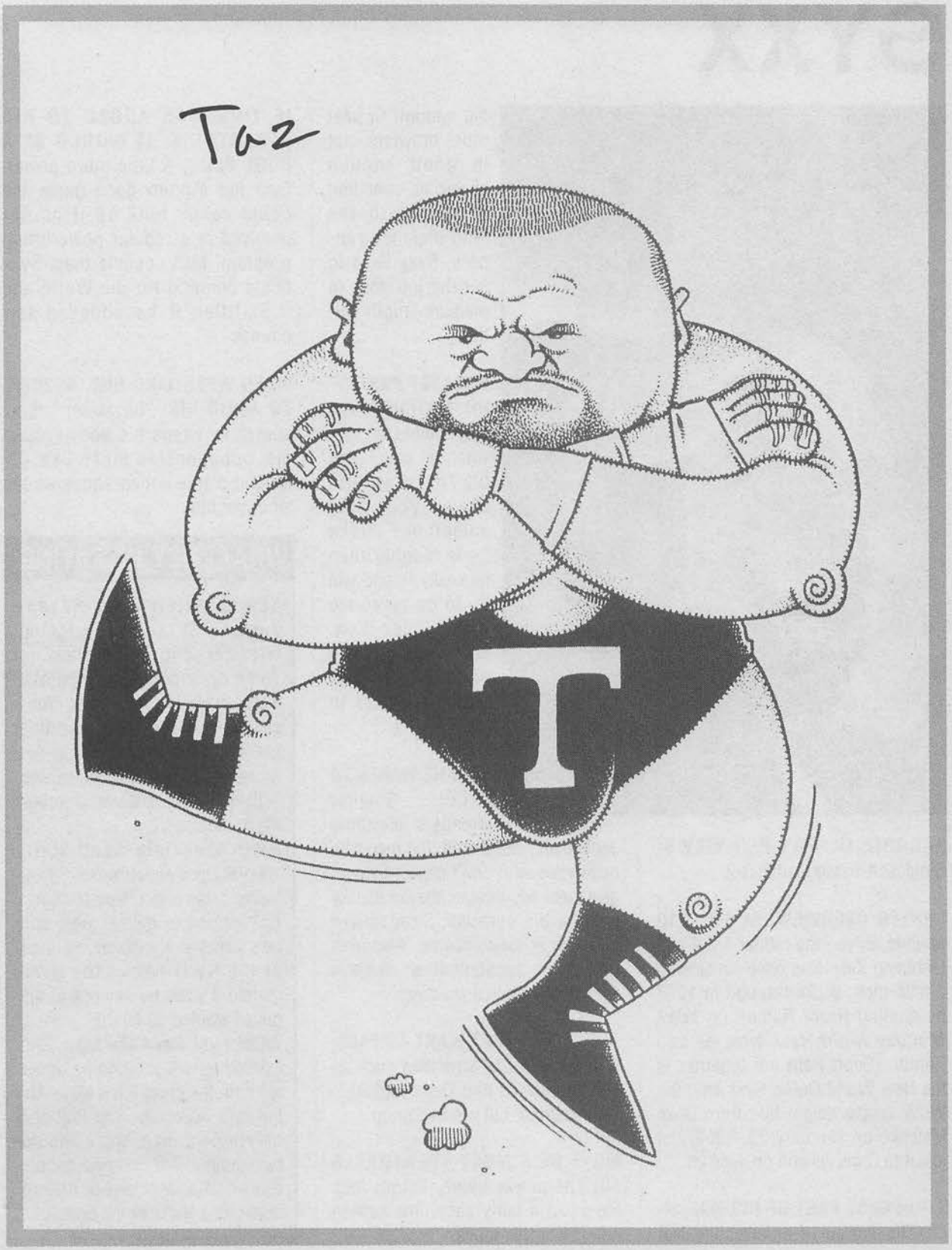
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Taz-mission. It's one of the most dangerous finishers in the sport. Even Shane Douglas, one of the best all-around wrestlers in ECW, had to tap out when caught in it. Honed to perfection by Taz, who is rightfully proud of it.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Former manager Bill Alfonso: "He's overrated. He's talented, but he's a loser. He's only where he is now because I got him there. I hope he has enjoyed being such a big star, because Sabu and Rob Van Dam are gonna take him down!"

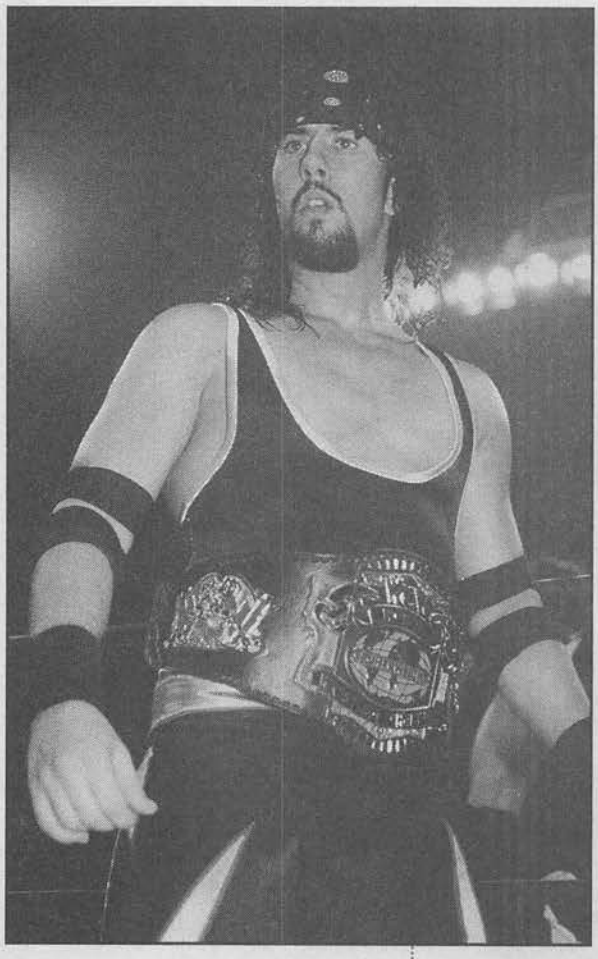
Sabu: "He respects me? Fine. I don't respect him. I think he's living in a dream world. Did he really think I'd come back over to his side? Why? I enjoy beating him too much."

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "Taz is among the most exciting wrestlers in the sport. Sometimes it looks like he has 100 variations of the suplex. I'd like to see him give it a try in either the WWF or WCW. I think he might surprise a lot of people."


Taz
T

SCOUTING REPORT:

SYXX



RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 4-5; tag teams: 3-2

CAREER OVERVIEW: At 6'2", 212 pounds, Syxx—the former 1-2-3 and Lightning Kid—was once considered a little man. Broke through in 1993 by pinning Razor Ramon on *WWF Monday Night Raw*. Now he and Ramon (Scott Hall) are together in the New World Order. Syxx won the WCW cruiserweight title from Dean Malenko on February 23, 1997, but lost it to Chris Jericho on June 28.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The nine-to-14-minute zone. Not big enough to beat most brawlers, not in good enough anaerobic condition to deal with the long-distance runners, Syxx likes to get the job done in medium-length battles.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first minute or two, when he is vulnerable to brawlers. Syxx, you see, sometimes thinks he is tougher than he really is and will try to go toe-to-toe with bigger men. Fortunately, he hasn't faced too many brawlers in WCW.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Smaller wrestlers like Chris Jericho and Jeff Jarrett. Big men with huge egos who don't expect Syxx to give them any trouble; they're usually in for a big surprise. Syxx thrives when he is the underdog. Also likes to test his substantial aerial skills against other aerial wrestlers.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Ultratalented mat wrestlers such as Eddy Guerrero and Dean Malenko. Syxx is good, but not that good.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The power bomb. Larger foes have had a fairly easy time setting him up for this move.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A little more power. Syxx has a pretty good frame and could easily bulk up if he got involved in a regular powerlifting program. Many people think Syxx could contend for the World and U.S. titles if he added a few pounds.

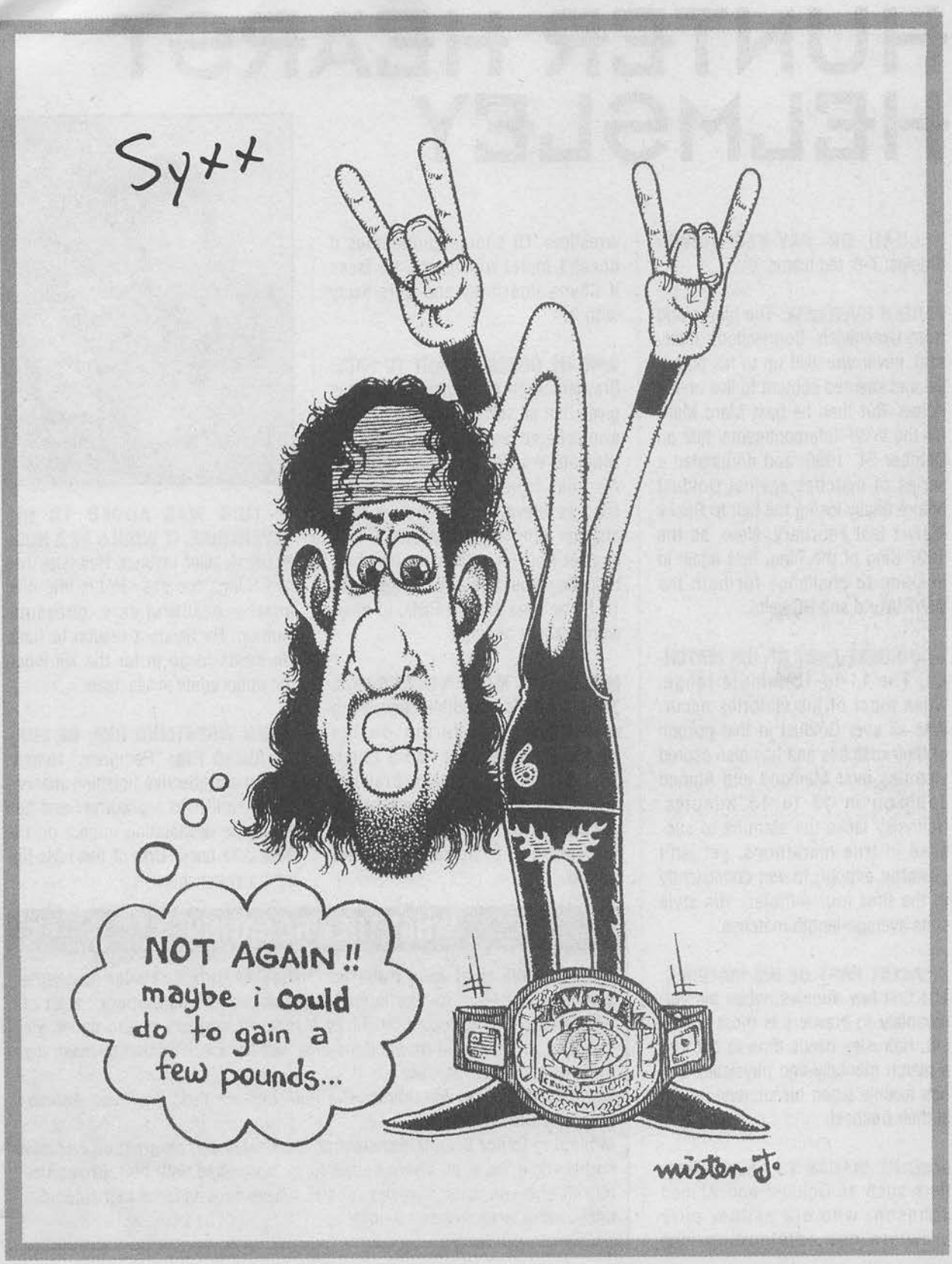
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Buzzkiller." Syxx somehow wraps his body around his opponent—almost like ivy around a tree—then squeezes the air out of him.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Syxx is a talented wrestler who has picked up some spectacular unexpected victories during his career, but I can't see him holding any title for very long. He seems to get more excitement out of joining with his NWO pals and interfering in matches."

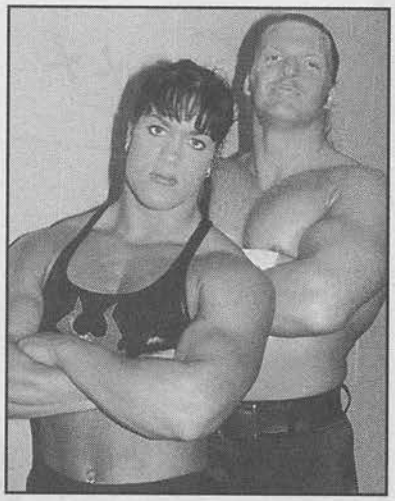
NWO associate Scott Hall: "Never underestimate Syxx. Never. I did and I lived to regret it. I learned to respect him, and he's become a valuable member of the NWO. When the NWO started, I knew he was one of the guys I wanted on board."

WCW rival Dean Malenko: "He learned a lot from training under my dad, the great Boris Malenko, but he's so cocky, and that can only hurt a man. Syxx should have a little more respect for his opponents and stop hiding behind the NWO all the time."


Syxx
NOT AGAIN!!
maybe i could
do to gain a
few pounds...
WCW
mister J.

SCOUTING REPORT:

HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 7-8; tag teams: 0-2

CAREER OVERVIEW: The blue blood from Greenwich, Connecticut, many said, never wrestled up to his potential and seemed content to live on his riches. But then he beat Marc Mero for the WWF Intercontinental title on October 21, 1996, and dominated a series of matches against Goldust before finally losing the belt to Rocky Maivia last February. Now, as the 1997 King of the Ring, he's again in position to challenge for both the WWF World and I-C belts.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The 11-to-16-minute range, when most of his victories occur. Was all over Goldust in that portion of their matches and has also scored victories over Mankind and Ahmed Johnson in 12 to 15 minutes. Helmsley lacks the stamina to succeed in true marathons, yet isn't powerful enough to win consistently in the first four minutes. His style suits average-length matches.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first few minutes, when his vulnerability to brawlers is most apparent. Helmsley needs time to get into a match mentally and physically and has trouble when his opponents are at their freshest.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Wrestlers such as Goldust and Ahmed Johnson, who are neither pure brawlers nor outstanding mat wrestlers. Of course, sometimes it doesn't mater much who he faces if Chyna interferes and gets away with it.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Brawlers such as Mankind, who has given him all sorts of trouble. He has also suffered one-sided losses to The Ultimate Warrior and Jake Roberts. Also has trouble with mat experts such as Steve Austin, and we can't imagine him having any kind of luck against Ken Shamrock. In baseball, Helmsley would be a .275 hitter with 18 home runs and 80 RBIs; in other words, above average.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Mankind's mandible claw. Even with Chyna interfering on his behalf, Helmsley has had a tough time against this insane brawler. Also tends to turn his back to his opponents too much and is thus susceptible to being rolled up from behind.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A killer instinct. Helmsley has had things too easy in his life: nice homes, beautiful cars, gorgeous women. He needs a reason to hate. He needs to go in for the kill when the opportunity avails itself.

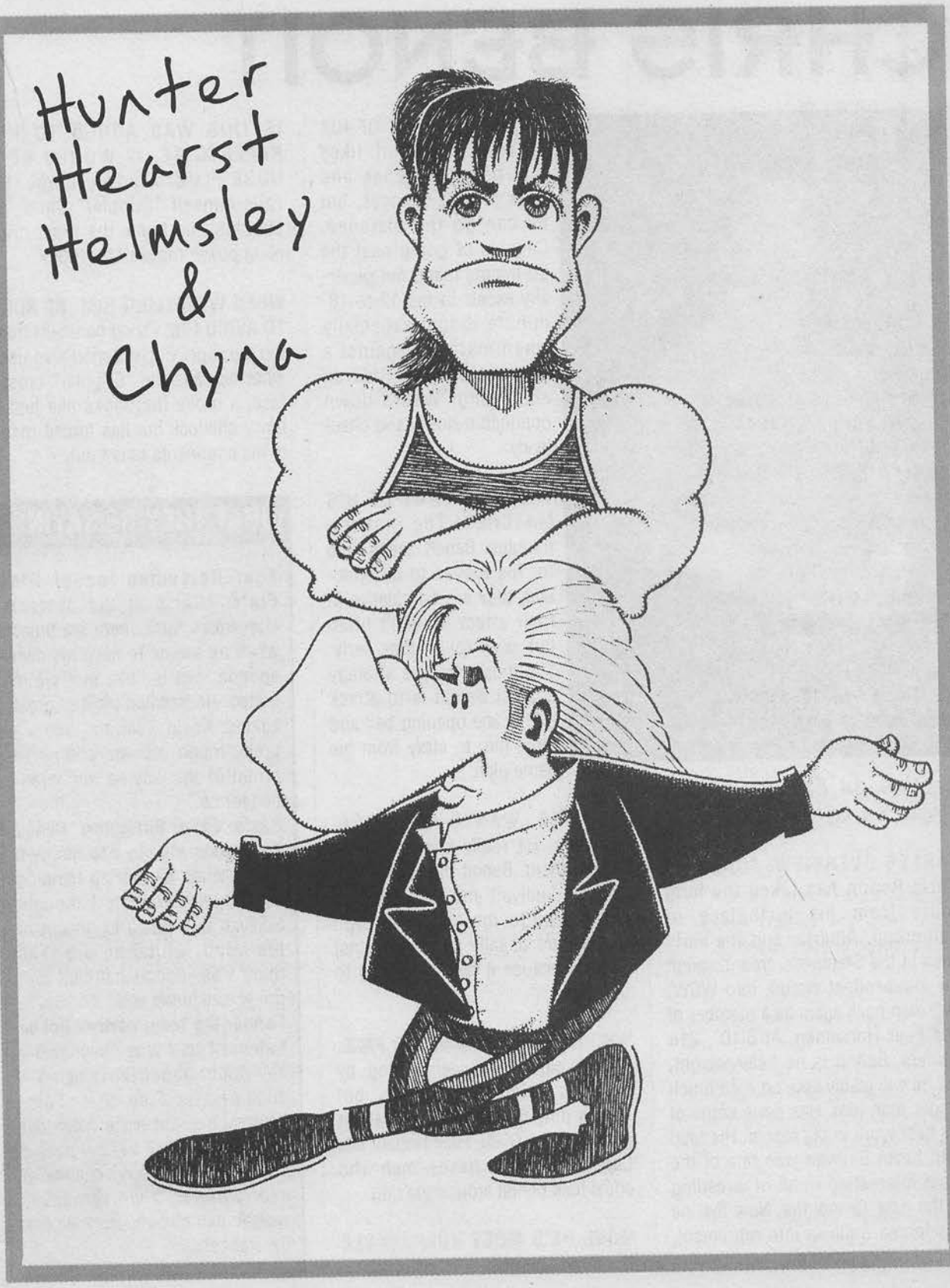
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Pedigree." Helmsley's most effective finishing maneuver is similar to a piledriver and has the same devastating impact on the neck and back. One of the best finishers in the sport.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Former WWF rival Jake Roberts: "Helmsley surprised a lot of people when he beat Mero for the Intercontinental belt and he surprised a lot of people when he got upset by Rocky Maivia. He's a hard one to figure. He has a lot of talent and tremendous size, but he doesn't seem to make the most of his tools."

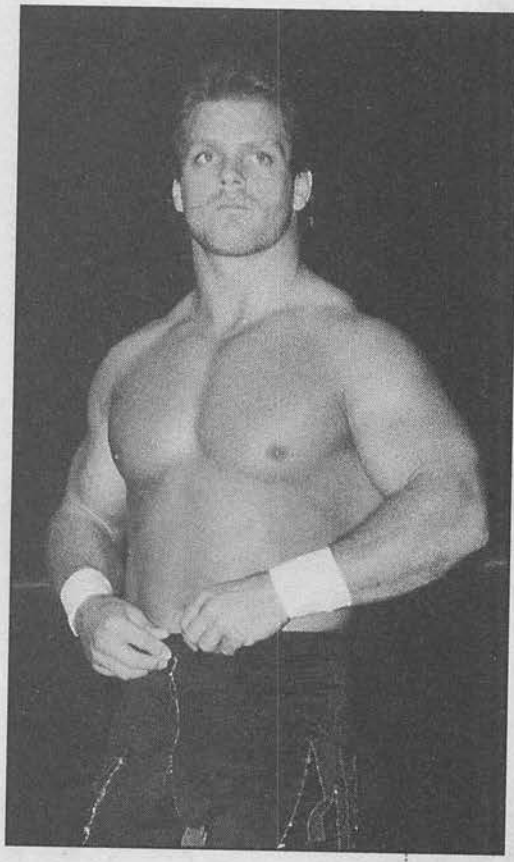
Current WWF rival Mankind: "The man has no guts. Plain and simple. And he looks too pretty."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "Helmsley can be great on one day and horrible the next. There seems to be no middle with him. Chyna has helped him win a lot of matches, and I have to wonder if that Intercontinental title victory wasn't a fluke."


Hunter
Hearst
Helmsley
&
Chyna

SCOUTING REPORT:

CHRIS BENOIT



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 5-4; tag teams: 2-3

CAREER OVERVIEW: "Crippler" Chris Benoit has taken the long route from his birthplace of Edmonton, Alberta, and the early days in the Stampede area, through the independent circuit, into WCW, out, then back again as a member of The Four Horsemen. At 5'10", 218 pounds, Benoit is no heavyweight, but he will gladly take on men much bigger than him. Has done some of his best work in tag teams. His feud with Kevin Sullivan was one of the most interesting in all of wrestling of the past 18 months. Now that he has forced Sullivan into retirement, he can finally move on.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Benoit likes fast-paced matches and likes to take chances, but he can go the distance. Capable of going past the 20-minute mark, but generally excels in the 12-to-18-minute range, especially when matched against a brawlers such as Sullivan and Meng. Wears down opponents slowly and effectively.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first few minutes. Benoit needs time for his moves to be effective; they are cumulative in their effect. Doesn't often put away tough foes early. The most effective strategy against Benoit is to attack him at the opening bell and force him to stray from his game plan.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Brawlers. He really knows how to handle them. Benoit did a great job against Sullivan and won most of their grudge matches. Foreign objects are usually useless against Benoit because it takes too long to use them.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Strong, gigantic brawlers. Meng, by the way, weighs 294 pounds, but stands only 6'. We're talking about guys like The Giant, Hulk Hogan, Lex Luger, and Kevin Nash—men who could toss Benoit around the ring.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Power bombs.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A power bomb. He calls himself "Crippler" Chris, so shouldn't he know the most crippling power move of the '90s?

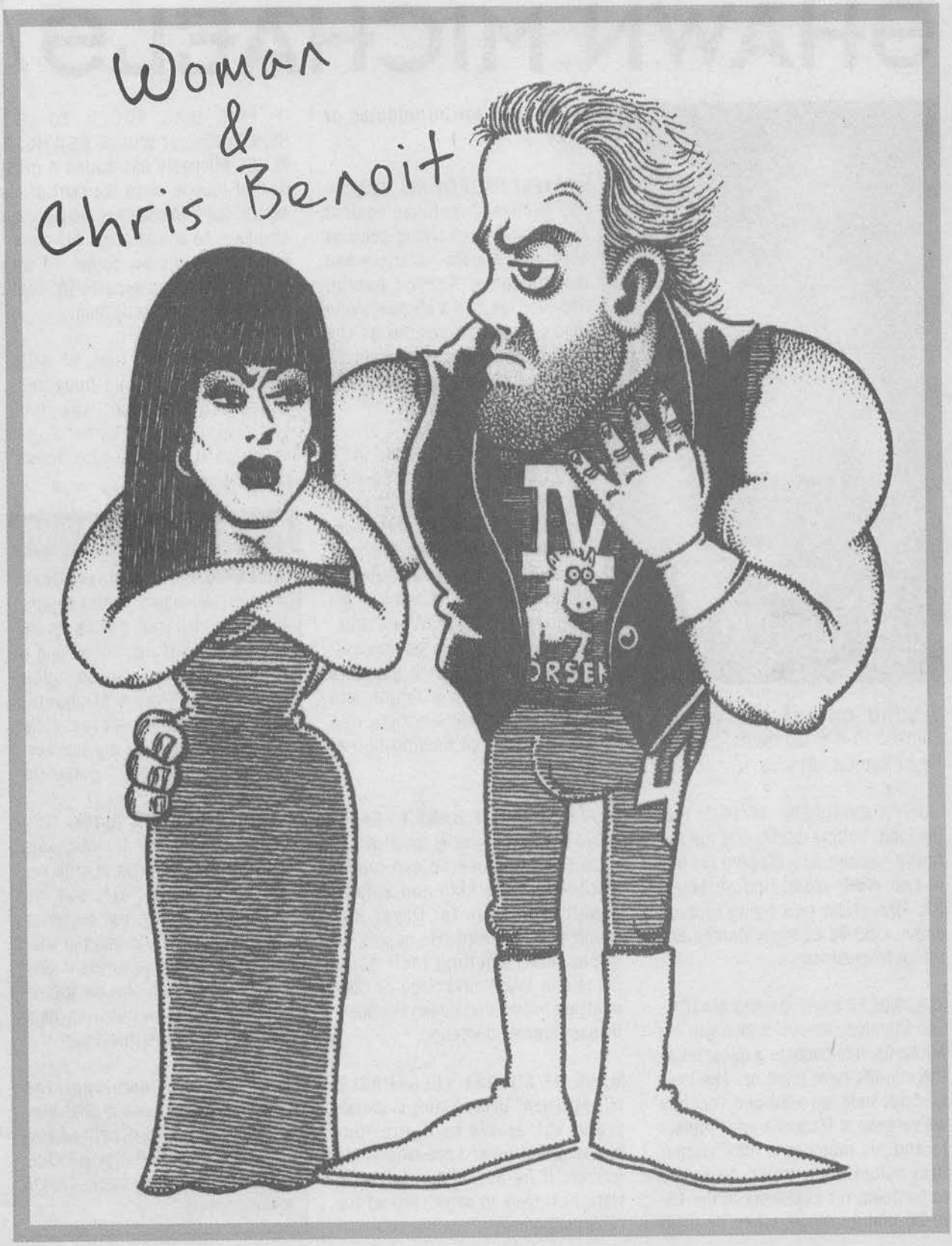
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Flying headbutt from the top rope. Ouch! Benoit also uses what he calls the "Crippler" crossface, a move that looks like just a fancy chinlock but has forced many of his opponents to tap out.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Four Horsemen leader Ric Flair: "Chris is the perfect Horseman. Sure, there are times when he seems to have his own agenda, but believe me, we're united. He handled himself great against Kevin Sullivan, who's a pretty tough veteran, and we're proud of the way he has wrestled for us."

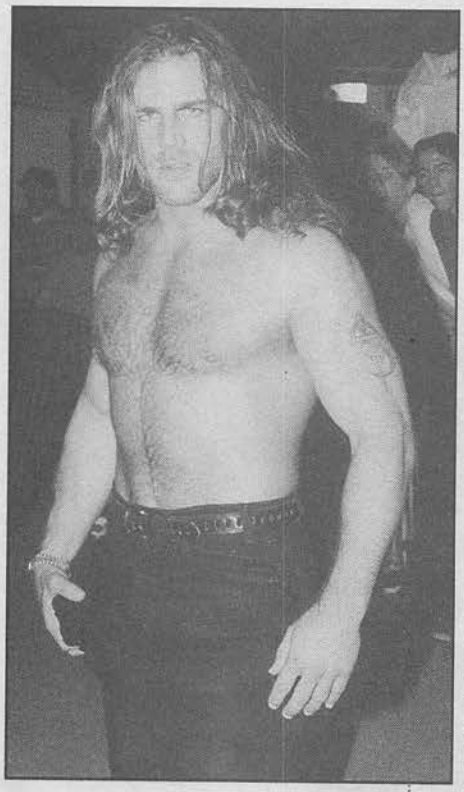
Senior Editor Bill Apter: "Benoit was taking his life into his own hands when he started hanging around with Woman. I thought Sullivan was going to go out of his mind, which he did. The thing was, Benoit handled him pretty well in the end."

Former tag team partner Bobby Eaton: "There was never really any doubt about Chris being a good wrestler. Sure, he isn't particularly big, but since when did that ever matter? I know people are saying he has no chance of ever winning a world heavyweight title, but why not? He has the right stuff."


Woman
&
Chris Benoit

SCOUTING REPORT:

SHAWN MICHAELS



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 15-5-4; tag teams: 5-6; two Royal Rumble victories

CAREER OVERVIEW: Michaels took the long, bumpy road to the top and finally reached it by winning his first of two WWF World title on March 31, 1996. Now he's trying to overcome a series of knee injuries and return to greatness.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Stamina, always a strength for Michaels, has become a question as the injuries have piled up. His knee has not held up well and recently we've seen a Michaels who prefers to end his matches a little sooner than before. As a result, he seems to be doing his best work in the 15-to-20-minute range, when he used to be good for 30 minutes or more.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Michaels' matches against Austin have been telling because both men are slow starters and fast finishers. Against Austin, however, we saw a Michaels who tends to get frustrated as the match continues and sometimes forgets his game plan after 20 minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: *We'd* love to see him face arch-rival Bret Hart, but the two of them can't seem to stay out of the hospital at the same time. Michaels needed less than 14 minutes to defeat "Psycho" Sid and win his most recent WWF World title, and he continues to be successful against two types: plodders who rely on only strength and fast-paced, high-risk wrestlers who have no chance of beating him at his own game.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Steve Austin has really given him a hard time because he can match Michaels in the skill and smarts department. Ditto for Davey Boy Smith and Bret Hart. He counts on opponents forgetting their game plans and takes advantage of their mistakes; when that doesn't happen, he has trouble countering.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Michaels' injured knee is particularly vulnerable to figure-four leglocks and other knee-weakening moves. If he ever again wrestles Hart, he'll have to steer clear of the "sharpshooter."

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Michaels has added a great deal of muscle since the start of his career, but if Michaels could get even stronger, he would offset his diminished speed. Power combined with his wide-ranging repertoire would make him a dangerous man.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Flying bodypress. Graceful and elegant, the flying bodypress is deceptively lethal. If he executes it perfectly, he doesn't need the superkick.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Rival/tag team partner Steve Austin: "Michaels is still tough, but let me tell you something: He ain't as good as me. I'm getting a little tired of hearing so much crap about Shawn Michaels, because he can't beat me. He's good enough to be my partner, but that don't mean I gotta like the guy."

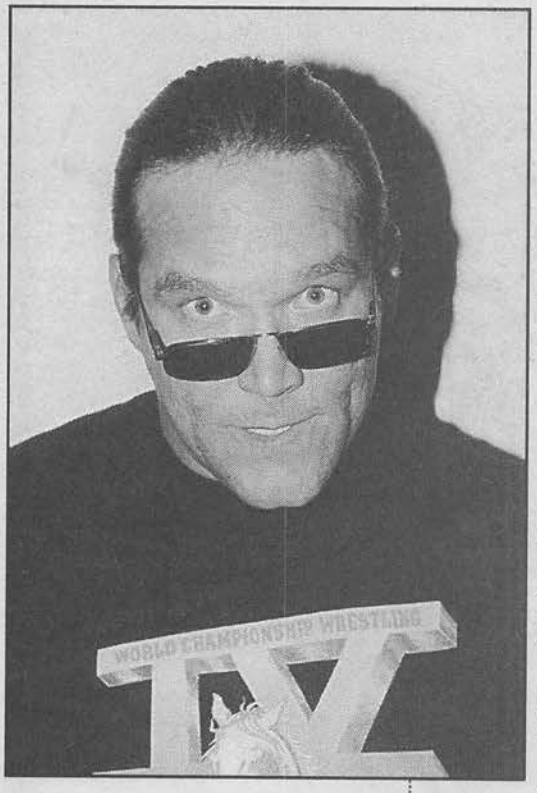
Senior Editor Bill Apter: "It's been a tough year for Michaels with the knee injuries and all the stuff with Bret Hart, but we should remember that he never lost the WWF World title the second time. He had to vacate it. Say what you will about his personality, but there's no question he's one of the best athletes in the world."

WWF wrestler/commentator Jerry Lawler: "I could beat him with one knee tied behind my back. Ha! Ha! Ha! Get it? One knee tied behind my back! That'd make us even."


Shawn Michaels
Hey Bay-bee!

SCOUTING REPORT:

STEVE McMICHAEL



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 3-2; tag teams: 0-4.

CAREER OVERVIEW: NFL star-turned-WCW commentator-turned member of The Four Horsemen has improved a lot as a wrestler in the last year and recently made the bold move of dumping his tag team partner of several months, Jeff Jarrett. But his wife, Debra, sided with Jarrett after Jeff beat Steve at Bash at the Beach. Now what does he do? "Mongo" still has a lot to learn about wrestling.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Big, strong, and powerful, McMichael is at his best in the early stages and is particularly dangerous in the two-to-seven-minute range. Never backs off and likes to go right after opponents; was effective with Jarrett because he would wear down their opponents in the first 10 minutes, enabling Jarrett to put his stamina to work in the latter stages.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Anything after 10 minutes. That's when McMichael is tired and ineffective. Like most former football players, McMichael wrestles best in short bursts of 15 to 30 seconds. Often gets into trouble when he can't tag out.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Other big brawlers with limited technical wrestling skills, although he lost to football player Kevin Greene at The Great American Bash when Jarrett's interference backfired. McMichael feels that he is strong enough to beat any power wrestler, especially when that opponent has a limited repertoire.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: The truth is, McMichael doesn't stand much of a chance against intelligent mid-sized scientific wrestlers with good stamina. It's best that he's on the same side as Ric Flair and Chris Benoit, two men who complement his size and power. McMichael will probably never be a great mat wrestler. The sweet science is not his game.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Figure-four leglocks, suplexes, and leg takedowns. A lot of amateur moves, actually. Armdrags and dropkicks.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Any submission hold would be great. His attack has become a bit too predictable.

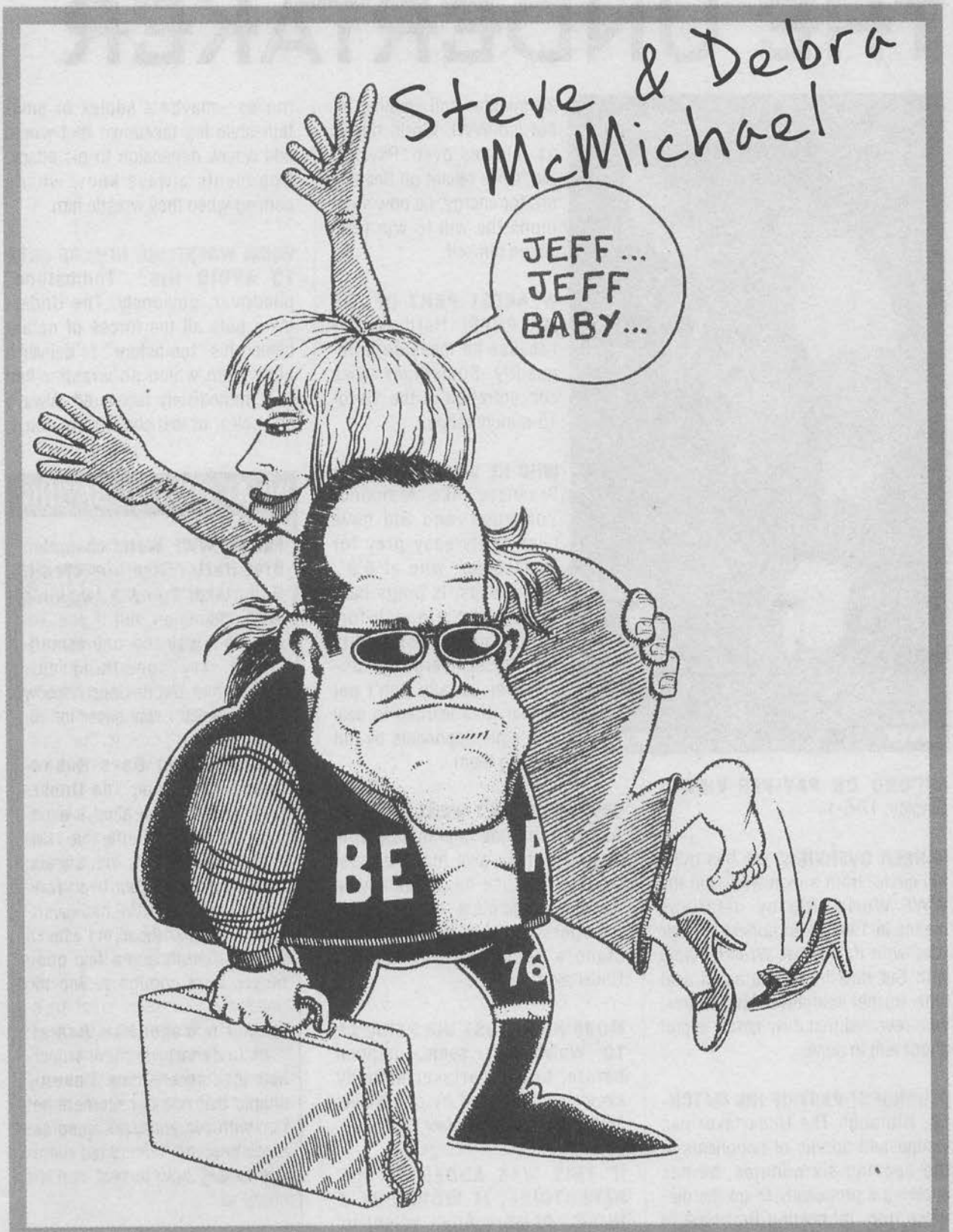
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Steel briefcase. Who knows what's in the damn thing? The only thing we know is that when McMichael gets his hands on the case—and the referee's back is turned—it's lights out! Also be wary of his piledriver.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Former tag team partner Jeff Jarrett: "I tried to teach 'Mongo' little by little, but he didn't seem to want to learn. Fine, let him be that way. All I know is that he's very jealous and very stupid, so it's a good thing he's so strong. When I look at 'Mongo,' I see a man who has all of the raw materials it takes to be a great one, but is too stubborn to take the next step."

Four Horseman Ric Flair: "Steve's a lot brighter than people give him credit for. Believe me, the man knows what he's doing. The trick now is turning him into a complete wrestler."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "I just don't see where he has improved as much as some people say. When is the last time he defeated an opponent of note fairly?"


Steve & Debra McMichael
JEFF... JEFF BABY...
BE
76

SCOUTING REPORT:

THE UNDERTAKER



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 17-5-1

CAREER OVERVIEW: He has gone full circle, from a man who won the WWF World title by nefarious means in 1991 to an honest brawler who won it fairly at WrestleMania XIII. But now he has to again deal with former manager Paul Bearer, who revealed that dirty family secret about him in June.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Although The Undertaker has vanquished dozens of opponents in the opening six minutes, he has showing a propensity to go the distance, too, by beating Bret Hart in 28 minutes and winning his second WWF World title in 21 minutes over "Psycho" Sid. Once reliant on Bearer's urn for energy, he now summons the will to win from within himself.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Hard to say because he loses so infrequently. Sometimes loses concentration in the 10-to-15-minute range.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Brawlers like Mankind, Yokozuna, and Sid have been fairly easy prey for Undertaker, who at 6'9", 328 pounds, is pretty hard to beat at the punch-for-punch game. Opponents who try to overpower Undertaker usually don't get too far. Has learned to deal with agile opponents by not chasing them.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Although he has beaten scientific wrestlers, they give him the most trouble because he doesn't have many moves in his repertoire. Smart wrestlers who aren't intimidated stand a decent chance against Undertaker.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: We've never seen it happen before, but Undertaker actually seemed intimidated by one move: Mankind's mandible claw.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Any scientific moves—maybe a suplex or amateur-style leg takedown that would add a new dimension to his attack. Opponents always know what's coming when they wrestle him.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Tombstone" piledriver, obviously. The Undertaker puts all the forces of nature behind his "tombstone" to deliver a blow from which no wrestler has ever immediately recovered. Always steer clear of that choke-slam, too.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Former WWF World champion Bret Hart: "Give him credit. Undertaker's now a two-time WWF champion, but if you ask me, he's way too one-dimensional. Try something new against him and he doesn't know how to react. I was never intimidated by him."

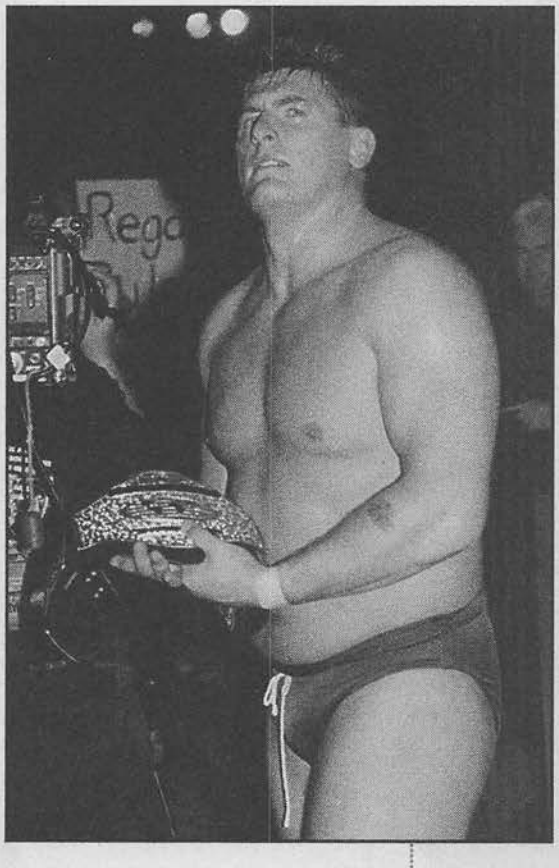
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Watching The Undertaker wrestle isn't always exciting, but he is so effective. Unfortunately, though, with Sid and Undertaker as its last two World champions, the WWF has reverted to the Hulk Hogan era when a lot of strength and a few good moves were enough to win the belt."

Former manager Paul Bearer: "The Undertaker is more vulnerable than people think. I already shared that one big secret about him with everyone, but there are more to come. I could tell everyone *exactly* how to beat him if I chose to."


Undertaker
REST IN PEACE.

SCOUTING REPORT:

STEVEN REGAL



RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 5-5-3; tag teams: 0-4

CAREER OVERVIEW: Claiming to be a descendant of British royalty, Regal broke into WCW in 1993 boasting that he was the greatest scientific wrestler in the world. The 6'4", 247-pound native of Blackpool, England, got off to a good start when he beat Rick Steamboat for the WCW TV title on September 19, 1993, but he hasn't made much progress since then. In fact, he has won the TV title three more times—most recently on May 18, 1997, when he beat Ultimo Dragon in a controversial match—but he hasn't come close to winning any other singles title.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Very good in the 13-to-18-minute range and pretty good beyond that, too. Has wrestled to 15-minute time-limit draws against Steamboat, Davey Boy Smith, and Brian Pillman. Does a good job of conserving his energy and unleashing one big burst for the latter portions of time-limit matches.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first few minutes. Regal stalls a lot early and tests the patience of opponents. It takes him a while to get warmed up.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Mid-sized brawlers who can't match his repertoire. Solid scientific wrestlers who challenge his ability. Regal can sometimes get lazy and needs to be prompted by an imaginative opponent.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Rey Misterio Jr. and those like him in style. Quick, talented little competitors with wider repertoires than he possesses.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The "Frankensteiner." You'd think a scientific "genius" such as Regal would have devised the proper counter for this common move. Well, he hasn't, and Regal has lost many matches in which he has been victimized by "Frankensteiners."

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Power moves such as power bombs, clotheslines, and piledrivers. Opponents don't fear Regal as much as they should.

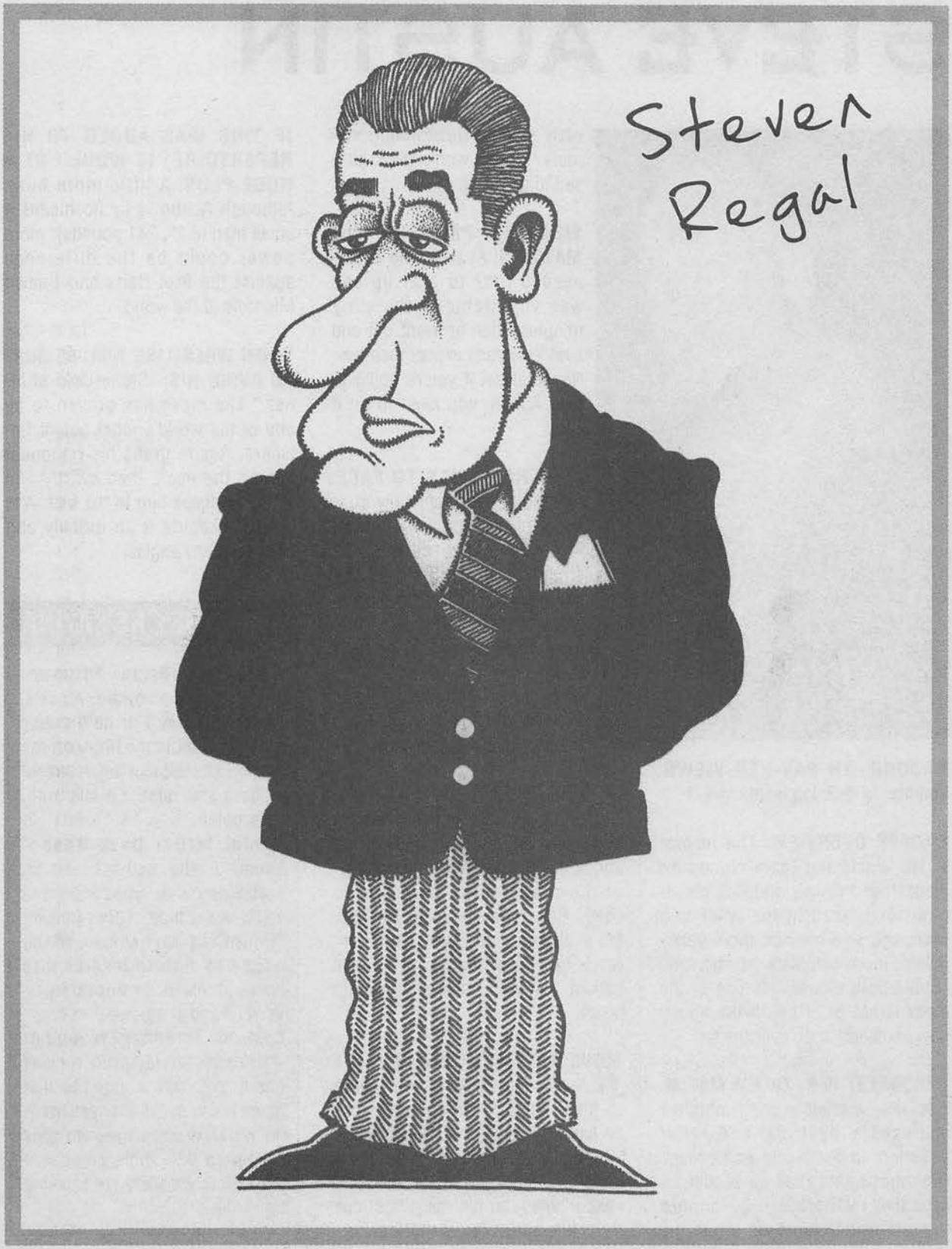
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Regal stretch." This one really stretches out the muscles and puts pressure on all parts of the body. It's hard not to submit to this within a few seconds.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "Regal has to be considered an underachiever. WCW TV champion? Is he really satisfied with that? Well, maybe he is, and that's part of the problem. Regal must set the bar higher for himself. Otherwise he'll never win the big one."

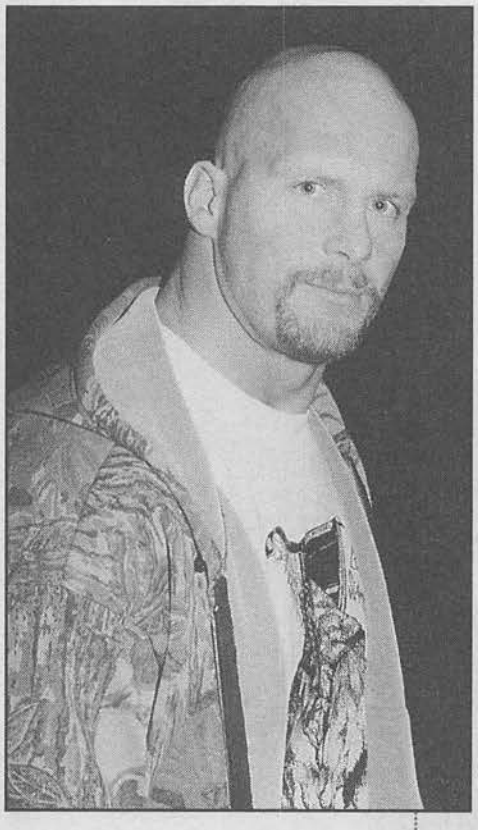
Former WCW tag team partner Bobby Eaton: "Once upon a time, I thought Regal had the potential to be one of the best in the world. Well, that hasn't happened, but I'm not surprised. He has the ability, but he doesn't have the mental approach necessary to succeed in this sport."

Fellow European Alex Wright: "Face it: American fans don't give European wrestlers their due. Mexicans, Japanese, yes. But not Europeans. Well, Lord Steven Regal has forced people to change their minds about us. I know that his success was a great example to me, and there are a lot of wrestlers in Europe whose doors to the U.S. will be opened by this man."


Steven
Regal

SCOUTING REPORT:

STEVE AUSTIN



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 14-5-2; tag teams: 4-6-1

CAREER OVERVIEW: The former WCW World tag team champion (with Brian Pillman) and U.S. champion resurfaced in the WWF two years ago as a meaner, more determined, more complete wrestler. His "Stone-Cold stunner" is one of the most lethal finishers in the sport; now he needs to go over the top.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Has excelled in long matches against the best mat and aerial wrestlers in the world and proves time and again that he is just as effective in the 20-to-30-minute range as most wrestlers are in the early stages. Outstanding stamina. Simply won't allow himself to get tired.

WEAKEST PART OF THE MATCHES: At one time Austin needed time to gear up and was vulnerable in the early minutes; then he went out and beat Yokozuna in less than two. Nonetheless, if you're going to beat Austin, you need to do it early.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Although Austin generally does some of his best work against talented mat wrestlers, he struggled against Bret Hart and has had difficulty with an ailing Shawn Michaels. Yet he hungers to prove that he's the best in the world and always wants to meet the best. Would love to get arch-rival Brian Pillman inside a steel cage.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Austin can inspire himself against huge brawlers and outstanding mat and aerial wrestlers. It's the middle-of-the-roaders that bore him to death. Good strategy against Austin: Move around, keep away from him, force him to concentrate and be patient. Patient is one thing Austin is not.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Austin says he'll never submit to Bret Hart's "sharpshooter," but he has fallen victim to Undertaker's "tombstone" piledriver quite a few times. Has also had some knee and neck injuries, so it's not a bad idea for opponents to target those areas.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A little more bulk. Although Austin is by no means a small man (6'2", 241 pounds), more power could be the difference against the Bret Harts and Shawn Michaels of the world.

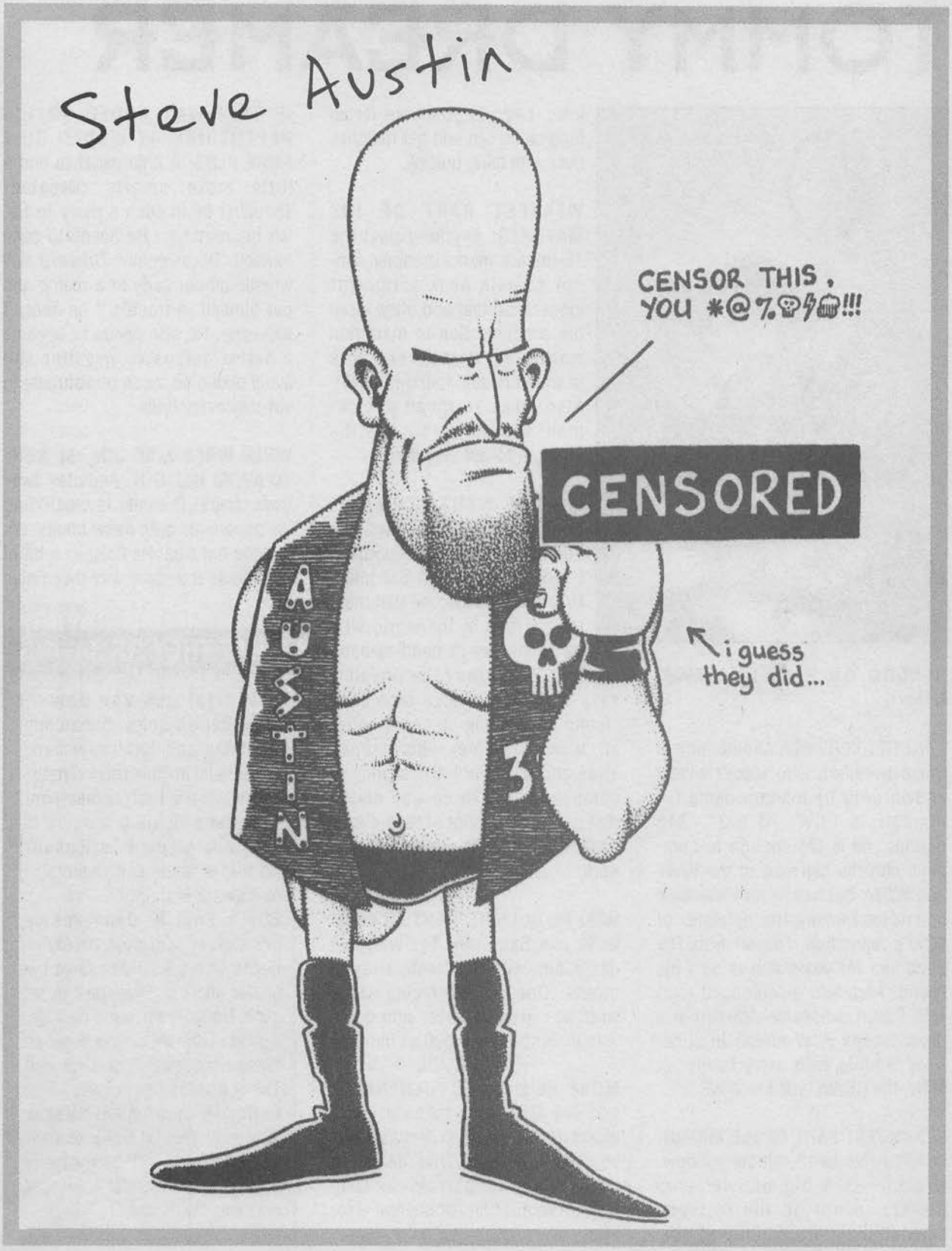
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Stone-Cold stunner." The move has proven to be one of the world's most potent finishers. Austin grabs his opponent behind the neck, then swiftly and viciously snaps him to the mat. And he can execute it so quickly and from so many angles.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

Arch-rival Brian Pillman: "Austin? He's a coward. A maniac and a coward. If he had any guts, he'd get in the ring with me and wrestle without any referees, without any rules. I'd take him, no problem."

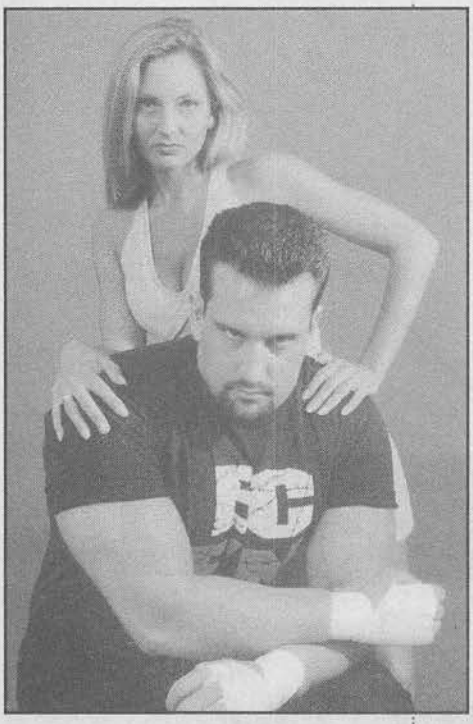
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Austin used to blame his problems on everyone else, and I still see a little of that in him. 'Stone-Cold' isn't stone-cold; he needs to hold himself more accountable if he hopes to be WWF World champion."

Contributing Editor Liz Hunter: "I'll say this about Austin: He isn't boring. You're not going to find many more exciting wrestlers in the world. What he needs to do is become a little more creative. I think other wrestlers are catching up to him."


Steve Austin
CENSOR THIS, YOU *@%!!!
CENSORED
AUSTIN
3
i guess they did...

SCOUTING REPORT:

TOMMY DREAMER



RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: None

CAREER OVERVIEW: Another one of those wrestlers who wasn't widely known until he made a name for himself in ECW. At 6'3", 245 pounds, he is big enough to compete with the big men of the WWF and WCW, but has never tried. Now considers himself the defender of ECW's reputation. Feuded with The Sandman for years and is now his friend. Also had a prolonged feud with Raven, whom he defeated in a loser-leaves-ECW match in June. Now feuding with Jerry Lawler in ECW, the USWA, and the WWF.

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The five-to-13-minute window. Dreamer is a big brawler who prefers to not go the distance against superior conditioned athletes. Likes to go all-out for as long as he can and get matches over with fairly quickly.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Anything past the 15-minute mark. Dreamer cannot sustain peak action for longer than that and often loses his concentration in marathon matches (at least the rare ones in which he has found himself). Also takes so much punishment that he rarely has the strength to last very long.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Medium-sized wrestlers like Tommy Rich, Tracey Smothers, Shane Douglas, and Sandman. Dreamer is convinced that there isn't a man in the world who can beat him in hand-to-hand combat. By the way, he privately says that he'd love to face ECW champ Terry Funk someday. After all, it was Dreamer who stepped aside and gave Funk the chance to compete in the three-way match that gave Funk a shot at then-champion Raven at ECW Barely Legal in April.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Guys like Sabu and Taz who can dazzle him with their wide array of moves. Doesn't like facing aerial wrestlers who can wear him down with their speed and outlast him.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The DDT. Has taken a lot of blows to the head in the last few years, and a good DDT delivered onto a steel chair is usually enough to put him (or anyone else) away.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A little patience and a little more smarts. Dreamer shouldn't be in such a hurry to finish his matches. He needs to pace himself. Occasionally, Dreamer will wrestle all-out early in a match and put himself in trouble if he doesn't win early. He also needs to become a better defensive wrestler and avoid taking so much punishment in virtually every bout.

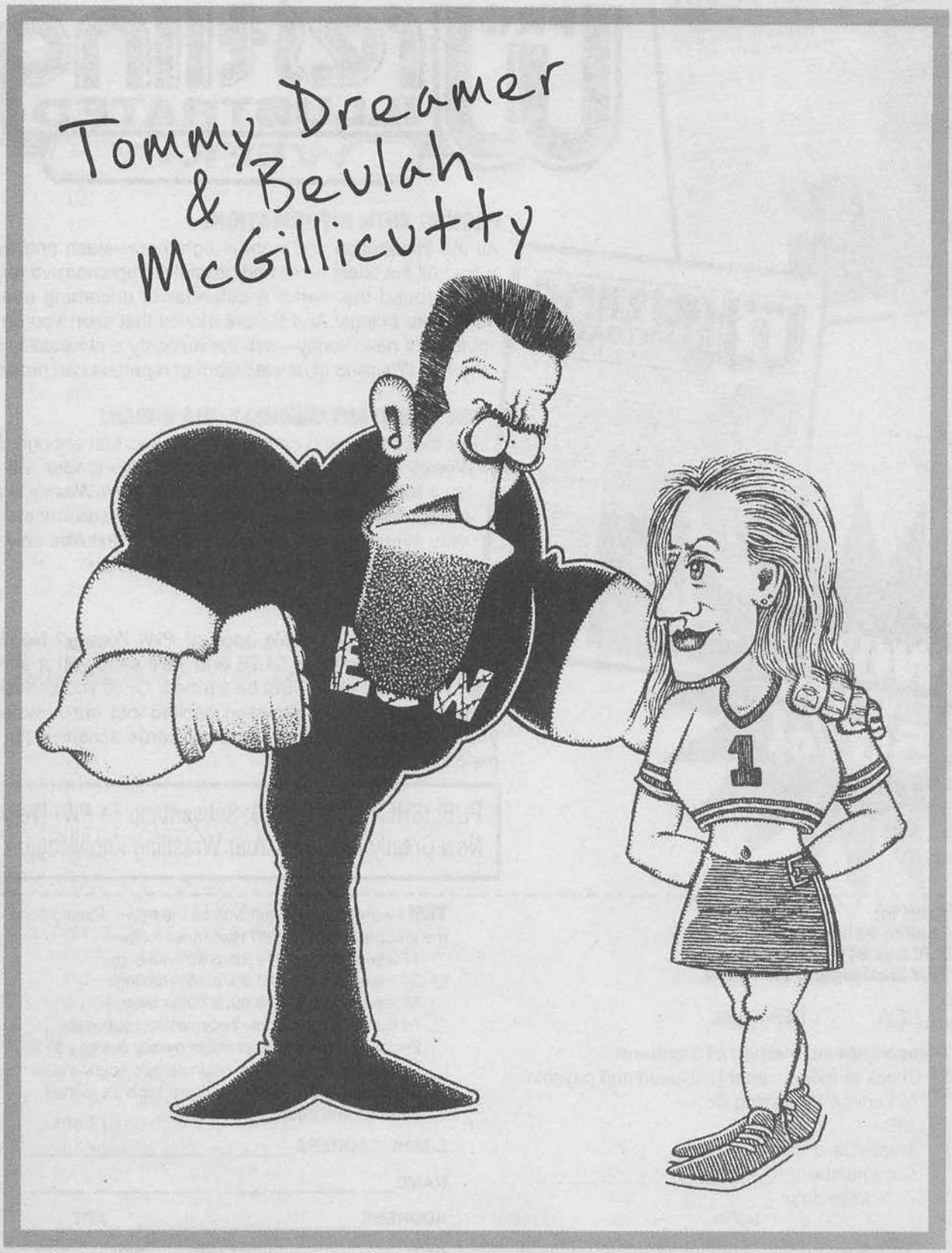
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: DDT. And stay away from chairs! Dreamer loves DDTing his opponents onto metal chairs. It's strange but true: He finishes a lot of opponents the same way they finish him!

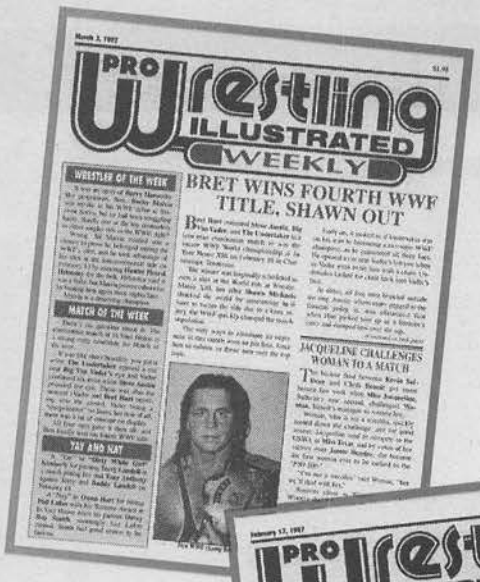
WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

ECW rival Rob Van Dam: "I hope Beulah enjoyed watching what me and Sabu and Jerry Lawler did to her man. There's more where that came from. Dreamer's fighting a battle he can't win. Maybe Beulah should do him a favor and make sure he's aware of that."

ECW's Paul E. Dangerously: "Whatever support Dreamer needs in his war with guys like Lawler and Van Dam, he's gonna get it. Dreamer's a tough man, and I don't think Lawler and Van Dam know what they're dealing with. This is gonna be a long war."

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "Dreamer can take punishment. He has proven it many times before. But I wonder how long his career will last."


Tommy Dreamer
& Beulah
McGillicutty
1



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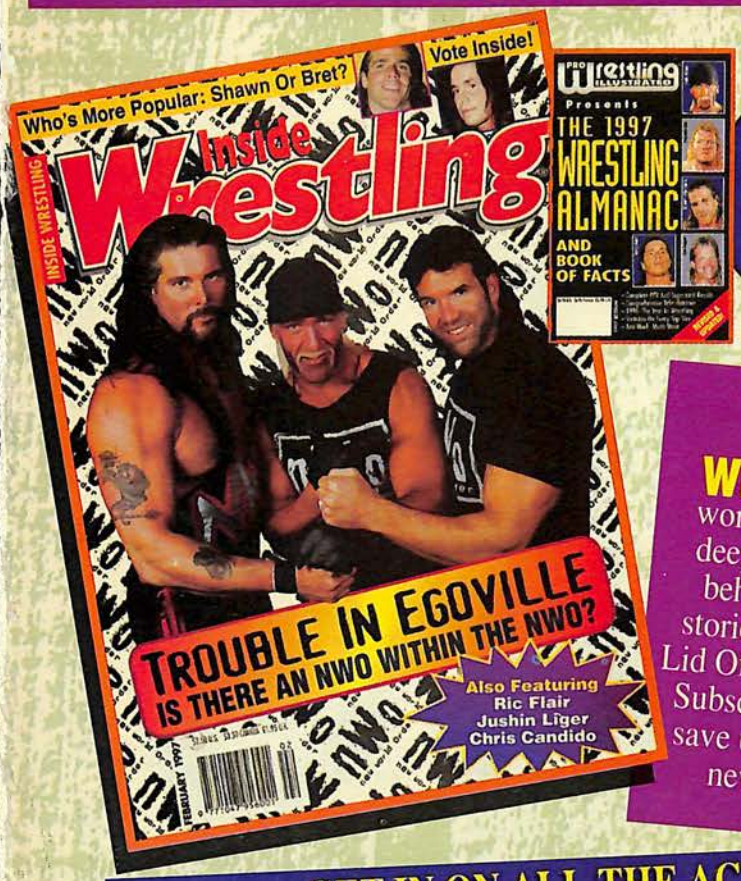
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